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CHRIST A COMPLETE SAVIOUR:

OR,

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST,
AND WHO ARE PRIVILEGED IN IT.

By JOHN BUNYAN.



LONDON:

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CHRIST A COMPLETE SAVIOUR;
OR,
THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST, AND
WHO ARE PRIVILEGED IN IT.

BY JOHN BUNYAN.

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

HOWEVER strange it may appear, it is a solemn fact, that the heart of man, unless prepared by a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, rejects Christ as a complete Saviour. The pride of human nature will not suffer it to fall, as helpless and utterly undone, into the arms of Divine mercy. Man prefers a partial Saviour; one who had done so much, that, *with the sinner's aid*, the work might be completed. Not such were the opinions of John Bunyan; the furnace of sharp conviction had burnt up this proud dross; he believed the testimony of Scripture, that from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet all nature is corrupted; so that out of the unsanctified heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, and the sad catalogue of crimes which our Lord enumerates, and which defile

our best efforts after purity of heart and life. No sinner will ever totally rely upon the Saviour until he is sensible of his own perishing state; hanging by the brittle thread of life over the yawning gulf of perdition; sinking in that sin which will swallow him up in those awful torments which await the transgressor; feeling that sin has fitted him as stubble for the fire; then it is that the cry proceeds from his heart, Lord, save, I perish; and then, and not till then, are we made willing to receive 'Christ as a complete Saviour' to the uttermost, not of his ability, but of our necessity. This was the subject of all Mr. Bunyan's writings, and, doubtless, of all his preaching. It was to direct sinners to the Lamb of God, who alone can take away sin. This little treatise was one of those ten 'excellent manuscripts' which, at Bunyan's decease, were found prepared for the press. It was first published in 1692, by his friends E. Chandler, J. Wilson, and C. Doe.

It is limited to a subject which is too often lost sight of, because it is within the veil—the intercession of Christ as the finishing work of a sinner's salvation. Many persons limit the 'looking unto Jesus' to beholding him upon the cross, a common popish error; but this is not enough; we must, in our minds, follow him to the unseen world, and thus ascend to a risen Saviour, *at the right hand of the Father*, making interces-

sion for our daily sins. And he is our ONLY Intercessor, and it is a rejection of him, for us to seek the aid of another. Who ever was mad enough to ask Moses to intercede for him, and surely he is as able as Mary or any other saint? To atone for sin calls for the amazing price of the blood of Christ, who was 'God manifest in the flesh.' He undertook the work by covenant; and all the 'saved' form part of his mystical body; thus perfectly obeying the law in him. He poured out his life to open a fountain for sin and uncleanness; and as they are liable to pollution in their passage through the world, he only is able, and he ever liveth, to make intercession for their transgressions. Thus he becomes a complete Saviour, and will crown, with an eternal weight of glory, all those that put their trust in him. Beautiful, and soul-softening, and heart-warming thoughts abound in this little work, which cannot fail to make a lasting impression upon the reader. Bunyan disclaims 'the beggarly art of complimenting' in things of such solemnity. p. 47. He describes the heart as *unweldable*, a remarkable expression, drawn from his father's trade of a blacksmith; nothing but grace can so heat it as to enable the hammer of conviction to weld it to Christ; and when thus welded, it becomes one with him. p. 59. There is hope for a returning backslider in a complete Saviour; he combines the evidence of two men, the coming and the returning

sinner; he has been, like Jonah, in the belly of hell; his sins, like talking devils, have driven him back to the Saviour. Sin brings its own punishment, from which we escape by keeping in the narrow path. Good works save us from temporal miseries, which ever follow an indulgence in sin; but if we fall, we have an Advocate and Intercessor to lift us up; still, if thou lovest thy soul, slight not the knowledge of hell, for that, with the law, are the spurs which Christ useth to prick souls forward to himself. O gather up thy heels and mend thy pace, or those spurs will be in thy sides. p. 77. Take heed, O persecutor; like Saul, thou art exceeding mad, and hell is thy bedlam. Take heed of a false faith; none is true but that which is acquired by a *kneeling*, searching, seeking for truth as for hid treasure. Death is God's bailiff, he will seize thee without warning; but with the saints, the grave's mouth is the final parting place between grace and sin. pp. 140, 141. Forget not that a good improvement will make your little grace to thrive. p. 152. Reader, may Divine grace indelibly fix these wholesome truths upon our minds.

GEORGE OFFOR.

CHRIST A COMPLETE SAVIOUR.

‘WHEREFORE HE IS ABLE ALSO TO SAVE THEM TO THE UTMOST THAT COME UNTO GOD BY HIM, SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.’—HEBREWS VII. 25.

THE apostle, in this chapter, presenteth us with two things; that is, with the greatness of the person and of the priesthood of our Lord Jesus.

First, He presenteth us with the greatness of his person, in that he preferreth him before Abraham, who is the father of us all; yea, in that he preferreth him before Melchisedec, who was above Abraham, and blessed him who had the promises.

Second, As to his priesthood, he sheweth the greatness of that, in that he was made a priest, not by the law of a carnal commandment, but by the power of an endless life. Not without, but with an oath, by him that said, ‘The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec;’ wherefore, ‘this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.’ Now my text is drawn from this conclusion, *namely*, that Christ abideth a priest contin-

ually. 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

In the words, I take notice of four things: **FIRST**, Of the intercession of Christ—He maketh intercession. **SECOND**, Of the benefit of his intercession—'Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost,' &c. **THIRD**, We have also here set before us the persons interested in this intercession of Christ—And they are those 'that come unto God by him.' **FOURTH**, We have also here the certainty of their reaping this benefit by him; to wit, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them—'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' *

[I. OF THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.]

FIRST, We will begin with **HIS INTERCESSION**, and will show you, *First*, What that is; *Second*, For what he intercedes; and, *Third*, What is also to be inferred from Christ's making intercession for us.

First, I begin, then, with the first; that is, to

Coming unto God by Christ, essentially involves in it walking in conformity to his image; and all such comers must be perfectly and eternally saved. Why then, O child of God, *should you suffer under Giant Despair, in his doubting, fearing*
castles.—Ed.

show you *what intercession is*. Intercession is prayer; but all prayer is not intercession. Intercession, then, is that prayer that is made by a third person about the concerns that are between two. And it may be made either to set them at further difference, or to make them friends; for intercession may be made against, as well as for, a person or people. 'Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel.' Ro. xi. 2. But the intercession that we are now to speak of is not an intercession of this kind, not an intercession against, but an intercession for a people. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' The high priest is ordained for, but not to be against the people. 'Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God,' to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; or 'that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.' He. v. 1. This, then, is intercession; and the intercession of Christ is to be between two, between God and man, for man's good. And it extendeth itself unto these: 1. To pray that the elect may be brought all home to him; that is, to God. 2. To pray that their sins committed after conversion may be forgiven them. 3. To pray that their graces which they receive at conversion may be maintained and supplied. 4. To pray that their persons may be preserved unto his heavenly kingdom.

Second, This is the intercession of Christ, or that for which he doth make intercession.

1. He prays for all the elect, that they may be brought home to God, and so into the unity of the faith, &c. This is clear, for that he saith, 'Neither pray I for these alone;' that is, for those only that are converted; 'but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;' for all them that shall, that are appointed to believe; or, as you have it a little above, 'for them which thou hast given me.' Jn. xvii. 9, 20. Ia. liii. 12. And the reason is, for that he hath paid a ransom for them. Christ, therefore, when he maketh intercession for the ungodly, and all the unconverted elect are such, doth but petitionarily ask for his own, his purchased ones, those for whom he died before, that they might be saved by his blood.

2. When any of them are brought home to God, he yet prays for them; namely, that the sins which through infirmity they, after conversion, may commit, may also be forgiven them.

This is showed us by the intercession of the high priest under the law, that was to bear away the iniquities of the holy things of the children of Israel; yea, and also by his atonement for them that sinned; for that it saith, 'And the priest shall make an atonement for him, for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.' Le. v. 10. *This also is intimated* even where our Lord doth

make intercession, saying, 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' Jn. xvii. 15. That Christ prayed that the converted should be kept from all manner of commission of sin, must not be supposed, for that is the way to make his intercession, at least in some things, invalid, and to contradict himself; for, saith he, 'I know that thou hearest me always.' Jn. xi. 42. But the meaning is, I pray that thou wouldest keep them from soul-damning delusions, such as are unavoidably such; also that thou wouldest keep them from the soul-destroying evil of every sin, of every temptation. Now this he doth by his prevailing and by his pardoning grace.

3. In his intercession he prayeth also that those graces which we receive at conversion may be maintained and supplied. This is clear where he saith, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Lu. xxii. 31, 32. Ay, may some say, he is said to pray here for the support and supply of faith, but doth it therefore follow that he prayed for the maintaining and supply of all our graces? Yes, in that he prayed for the preservation of our faith, he prayed for the preservation of all our graces; for faith is the mother grace, the root grace, the *grace that hath* all others in the bowels of it, and

that from the which all others flow; yea, it is that which gives being to all our other graces, and that by which all the rest do live. Let, then, faith be preserved, and all graces continue and live—that is, according to the present state, health, and degree of faith. So, then, Christ prayed for the preservation of every grace when he prayed for the preservation of faith. That text also is of the same tendency where he saith, ‘Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.’ Jn. xvii. 11. Keep them in thy fear, in the faith, in the true religion, in the way of life by thy grace, by thy power, by thy wisdom, &c. This must be much of the meaning of this place, and he that excludes this sense will make but poor work of another exposition.

4. He also in his intercession prayeth that our persons be preserved, and brought safe unto his heavenly kingdom. And this he doth, (1.) By pleading interest in them. (2.) By pleading that he had given, by promise, glory to them. (3.) By pleading his own resolution to have it so. (4.) By pleading the reason why it must be so.

(1.) He prays that their persons may come to glory, for that they are his, and that by the best of titles: ‘Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.’ Jn. xvii. 6. Father, I will have them; Father, I will have them, for they are mine: ‘Thine they *were, and thou gavest them me.*’ What is mine, my

wife, or my child, or my jewel, or my joy, sure I may have it with me. Thus, therefore, he pleads or cries in his intercession, that our persons might be preserved to glory: They are mine, 'and thou gavest them me.'*

(2.) He also pleads that he had given—given already, that is, in the promise—glory to them, and therefore they must not go without it. 'And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.' *Jn. xvii. 22.* Righteous men, when they give a good thing by promise, they design the performance of that promise; nay, they more than design it, they purpose, they determine it. As the mad prophet also saith of God, in another case, 'Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' *Na. xxiii. 19.* Hath Christ given us glory, and shall we not have it? Yea, hath the truth itself bestowed it upon us, and shall those to whom it is given, even given by Scripture of truth, be yet deprived thereof?

(3.) He pleads in his interceding that they might have glory; his own resolution to have it so. 'Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given

* What indescribable consolations flow into the Christian's soul from communion with God, especially to the most deeply afflicted. Thus the widow casts her care upon her heavenly Father—her Creator, Christ; for all things were made by him. He is her husband, ever living to intercede for her. *Wondrous privileges!*—*Ed.*

me, be with me where I am.' Jn. xvii. 24. Behold ye here, he is resolved to have it so. It must be so. It shall be so. I will have it so. We read of Adonijah, that his father never denied him in anything. He never said to him, 'Why hast thou done so?' 1 K. i. 6. Indeed, he denied him the kingdom; for his brother was heir of that from the Lord. How much more will our Father let our Lord Jesus have his mind and will in this, since he also is as willing to have it so as is the Son himself. 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' Lu. xii. 32. Resolution will drive things far, especially resolution to do that which none but they that cannot hinder shall oppose. Why this is the case, the resolution of our Intercessor is, that we be preserved to glory; yea, and this resolution he pleads in his intercession: 'Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am,' &c. Jn. xvii. 24. Must it not, therefore, now be so?

(4.) He also, in the last place, in this his intercession, urges a reason why he will have it so, namely, 'That they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' ver. 24. And this is a reason to the purpose; it is as if he had said, Father, these have continued with me in my temptations; these have seen me under all my disad-

vantages; these have seen me in my poor, low, contemptible condition; these have seen what scorn, reproach, slanders, and disgrace I have borne for thy sake in the world; and now I will have them also be where they shall see me in my glory. I have told them that I am thy Son, and they have believed that; I have told them that thou lovest me, and they have believed that; I have also told them that thou wouldest take me again to glory, and they have believed that; but they have not seen my glory, nor can they but be like the Queen of Sheba, they will but believe by the halves unless their own eyes do behold it. Besides, Father, these are they that love me, and it will be an increase of their joy if they may but see me in glory; it will be as a heaven to their hearts to see their Saviour in glory. I will, therefore, that those which 'thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' This, therefore, is a reason why Christ Jesus our Lord intercedes to have his people with him in glory.

Third, I come now to the third thing, namely, to show you *what is to be inferred from Christ's making intercession for us*.

1. This is to be inferred from hence, that saints—for I will here say nothing of those of the elect uncalled—do oftentimes give occasion of offence to God, even they that have received grace; for intercession is made to continue one in the favour

of another, and to make up those breaches ~~at~~ ^{the} at any time, shall happen to be made by one ~~the~~ ^{the} the alienating of the affections of the other. ~~thus~~ ^{And} thus he makes reconciliation for iniquity; for ~~re~~ ^{re} reconciliation may be made for iniquity two ways ~~first~~ ^{first} first, by paying of a price; secondly, by insistin ~~g~~ ^g upon the price paid for the offender by way of intercession. Therefore you read that as the goat was to be killed, so his blood was, by the priest, to be brought within the veil, and, in a way of intercession, to be sprinkled before and upon the mercy-seat: 'Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering, ~~that is~~ ^{that is}, for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat; and he shall make an atonement for the holy ~~place~~ ^{place}, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them, in the midst of their uncleanness.' *Le. xvi. 15, 16.* This was to be done, as you see, that the tabernacle, which was the place of God's presence and graces, might yet remain among the children of Israel, notwithstanding their uncleannesses and transgressions. This, also, is the effect of Christ's intercession; it is that the signs of God's presence and his grace might remain among his people, notwithstanding

they have, by their transgressions, so often provoked God to depart from them.

2. By Christ's intercession I gather, that awakened men and women, such as the godly are, dare not, after offence given, come in their own names to make unto God an application for mercy. God, in himself, is a consuming fire, and sin has made the best of us as stubble is to fire; wherefore, they may not, they cannot, they dare not approach God's presence for help but by and through a mediator and intercessor. When Israel saw the fire, the blackness and darkness, and heard the thunder, and lightning, and the terrible sound of the trumpet, 'they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. *Ex. xx. 19. De. xviii. 16.* Guilt, and sense of the disparity that is betwixt God and us, will make us look out for a man that may lay his hand upon us both, and that may set us right in the eyes of our Father again. This, I say, I infer from the intercession of Christ; for, if there had been a possibility of our ability to have approached God with advantage without, what need had there been of the intercession of Christ?

Absalom durst not approach—no, not the presence of his father—by himself, without a mediator and intercessor; wherefore, he sends to Joab to go to the king and make intercession for him. *2 Sa. xiii. 1.*

xiv. 32, 33. Also, Joab durst not go upon that errand himself, but by the mediation of another. Sin is a fearful thing, it will quash and quail the courage of a man, and make him afraid to approach the presence of him whom he has offended, though the offended is but a man. How much more, then, shall it discourage a man, when once loaden with guilt and shame, from attempting to approach the presence of a holy and a sin-avenging God, unless he can come to him through, and in the name of, an intercessor? But here now is the help and comfort of the people of God—there is to help them under all their infirmities an intercessor prepared, and at work. ‘He ever liveth to make intercession.’

3. I also infer from hence, that should we, out of an ignorant boldness and presumption, attempt, when we have offended, by ourselves to approach the presence of God, God would not accept us. He told Eliphaz so. What Eliphaz thought, or was about to do, I know not; but God said unto him, ‘My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is right*, as my servant Job *hath*. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves (that is, by him) a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I *accept*; lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in

that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is* right, like my servant Job.' See here, an offence is a bar and an obstruction to acceptance with God, but by a mediator, but by an intercessor. He that comes to God by himself, God will answer him by himself—that is, without an intercessor; and I will tell you, such are not like to get any pleasant or comfortable answer—I will answer him that so cometh according to the multitude of his idols. 'And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord.' Eze. xiv. 7, 8.

He that intercedes for another with a holy and just God had need be clean himself, lest he with whom he so busieth himself say to him, First clear thyself, and then come and speak for thy friend. Wherefore, this is the very description and qualification of this our High Priest and blessed Intercessor, 'For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins,' &c. He. vii. 26, 27. Had we not had such an Intercessor, we had been but in a very poor case; but we have one that becomes us; one that fits us to the purpose; one against whom our God hath nothing, can

object nothing; one in whose mouth no guile can be found.*

4. Since Christ is an Intercessor, I infer that he has wherewithal in readiness to answer to all demands that may be propounded by him that have been by us offended, in order to a renewing of peace and letting out of that grace to us that we have sinned away, and yet have need of. Ofttimes the offended saith to the intercessor, Well, thou comest to me about this man; what interest he has in thee is one thing, what offence he has committed against me is another. I speak now after the manner of men. Now, what can an intercessor do, if he is not able to answer this question? But now, if he be able to answer this question—that is, according to law and justice, no question but he may prevail with the offended, for him for whom he makes intercession.

Why, this is our case; to be sure, thus far it is, we have offended a just and a holy God, and Jesus Christ is become Intercessor. He also knows full well, that for our parts, if it would save us from

* The infinite perfection of the Mediatorial work of Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, is the ground of our hope. He alone can effectually plead with God. O my soul! if, in thy holiest and happiest moments, thou art found 'looking unto Jesus,' how much more intensely ought thy trembling eye to be directed to him, when thou art wounded by sin!!—Ed.

hell, we cannot produce towards a peace with God so much as poor two farthings; that is, not anything that can by law and justice be esteemed worth a halfpenny; yet he makes intercession. It follows, therefore, that he has wherewith of his own, if that question afore is propounded, to answer to every reasonable demand. Hence, it is said, that he has gifts as well as sacrifice for sin. 'Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.' He. viii. 3 And, observe it, the apostle speaks here of Christ as in heaven, there ministering in the second part of his office; 'For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest.' ver. 4. These gifts, therefore, and this sacrifice, he now offereth in heaven by way of intercession, urging and pleading as an Intercessor, the valableness of his gifts for the pacifying of that wrath that our Father hath conceived against us for the disobediences that we are guilty of. 'A gift in secret pacifieth anger; and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.' Pr. xxi. 14.

What gifts these are the Scripture everywhere testifies. He gave himself, he gave his life, he gave his all for us. Jn. vi. Ga. i. 4. 1 Ti. ii. 6. Mat. xx. 28. These gifts, as he offered them up at the demand of justice on Mount Calvary for us, so now he is in heaven he presenteth them continually before God, as gifts and sacrifice valuable for the sins, for all the

sins that we, through infirmity, do commit, from the day of our conversion to the day of our death. And these gifts are so satisfactory, so prevalent with God, that they always prevail for a continual remission of our sins with him. Yea, they prevail with him for more than for the remission of sins; we have, through their procurement, our graces often renewed, the devil often rebuked, the snare often broken, guilt often taken away from the conscience, and many a blessed smile from God, and love-look from his life-creating countenance.

Ep. III. 12.

5. Since Christ is an Intercessor, I infer that believers should not rest at the cross for comfort; justification they should look for there; but, being justified by his blood, they should ascend up after him to the throne. At the cross you will see him in his sorrows and humiliations, in his tears and blood; but follow him to where he is now, and then you shall see him in his robes, in his priestly robes, and with his golden girdle about his paps. Then you shall see him wearing the breastplate of judgment, and with all your names written upon his heart. Then you shall perceive that the whole family in heaven and earth is named by him, and how he prevaieth with God the Father of mercies, for you. Stand still awhile and listen; yea, enter with boldness into the holiest, and see your Jesus as he now appears in the presence of God for you;

what work he makes against the devil and sin, and death and hell, for you. He. x. 9. Ah! it is brave following of Jesus Christ to the holiest, the veil is rent, you may see with open face as in a glass, the glory of the Lord. This, then, is our High Priest, this his intercession, these the benefits of it! It lieth on our part to improve it; and wisdom to do that also comes from the mercy-seat, or throne of grace, where he, even our High Priest, ever liveth to make intercession for us; to whom be glory for ever and ever.

[II. OF THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.]

[SECOND.] And thus have I spoken to the first thing—to wit, of the intercession of Christ; and now I come more particularly to speak to the second, THE BENEFITS OF HIS INTERCESSION; namely, that we are saved thereby. Wherefore he is able also to save them, seeing he maketh intercession for them. 'He is able to save them to the uttermost.'

In my handling of this head, I must show you, *First*, What the apostle means here by 'save'—'Wherefore he is able to save.' *Second*, What he means here by saving to the 'uttermost'—'He is able to save to the uttermost.' *Third*, And then, thirdly, we shall do as we did in the foregoing—to wit, gather some inferences from the whole, and speak to them.

First, What doth the apostle mean here by 'save' — 'He is able to *save* them.'

To 'save' may be taken two ways. In the general, I know it may be taken many ways, for there are many salvations that we enjoy; yea, that we never knew of, nor can know, until we come thither, where all secret things shall be seen, and where that which has been done in darkness shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. But I say there are two ways that this word may be taken—
1. To save in a way of justification. 2. Or to save in a way of preservation. Now, Christ saves both these ways. But which of these, or whether both of them are intended in this place, of that I shall tell you my thoughts anon; meanwhile, I will show you,

1. What it is to be saved in the first sense, [namely, in a way of justification,] and also how that is brought to pass.

To be saved is to be delivered from guilt of sin that is by the law, as it is the ministration of death and condemnation; or, to be set free therefrom before God. This is to be saved; for he that is not set free therefrom, whatever he may think of himself, or whatever others may think concerning him, he is a condemned man. It saith not, he *shall be*, but, he *is* condemned *already*. Jn. iii. 18. The reason is, for that he has deserved the sentence *of the ministration* of condemnation, which is the

law. Yea, that law has already arraigned, accused, and condemned him before God, for that it hath found him guilty of sin. Now he that is set free from this, or, as the phrase is, 'being made free from sin,' Ro. vi. 22; that is, from the imputation of guilt, there can, to him, be no condemnation, no condemnation to hell fire; but the person thus made free may properly be said to be saved. Wherefore, as sometimes it saith, we *shall* be saved, respecting saving in the second sense, or the utmost completing of salvation; so sometimes it saith, we *are* saved, as respecting our being already secured from guilt, and so from condemnation to hell for sin, and so set safe, and quit from the second death before God. 1 Co. i. 18. Ep. ii. 5.

Now, saving thus comes to us by what Christ did for us in this world, by what Christ did for us as suffering for us. I say, it comes to us thus; that is, it comes to us by grace through the redemption that is in Christ. And thus to be saved is called justification, justification to life, because one thus saved is, as I said, acquitted from guilt, and that everlasting damnation to which for sin he had made himself obnoxious by the law. 1 Co. xv. 1-4. Ro. v. 8-10.

Hence we are said to be saved by his death, justified by his blood, and reconciled to God by the death of his Son; all which must respect his offering of himself on the day he died, and not his

improving of his so dying in a way of intercession, because in the same place the apostle reserveth a second, or an additional salvation, and applieth that to his intercession, 'Much more then, being now,' or already, 'justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him;' that is, through what he will further do for us. 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled,' that is, by his death, 'we shall be saved by his life,' his intercession, which he ever liveth to complete. ver. 9, 10.

See here, we are said to be justified, reconciled already, and therefore we shall be saved, justified by his blood and death, and saved through him by his life.

2. Now the saving intended in the text is saving in this second sense; that is, a saving of us by preserving us, by delivering of us from all those hazards that we run betwixt our state of justification and our state of glorification. Yea, such a saving of us as we that are justified need to bring us into glory. Therefore,

When he saith he is able to save, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession, he addeth saving to saving; saving by his life to saving by his death; saving by his improving of his blood to saving by his spilling of his blood. He gave himself a ransom for us, and now improves that gift in the

presence of God by way of intercession. For, as I have hinted already, the high priests under the law took the blood of the sacrifices that were offered for sin, and brought it within the veil, and there sprinkled it before and upon the mercy-seat, and by it made intercession for the people to an additional way of saving them; the sum of which Paul thus applies to Christ when he saith, 'He can save, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession.'

That also in the Romans is clear to this purpose, 'Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died.' Ro. viii. 31-39. That is, who is he that shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect to condemnation to hell, since Christ has taken away the curse by his death from before God? Then he adds, that there is nothing that *shall yet* happen to us, shall destroy us, since Christ also liveth to make intercession for us, 'Who shall condemn? *It is* Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'

Christ, then, by his death saveth us as we are sinners, enemies, and in a state of condemnation by sin; and Christ by his life saveth us as considered justified, and reconciled to God by his blood. So, then, we have salvation from that condemnation that sin had brought us unto, and salvation from those ruins that all the enemies of our souls would yet bring us unto, but cannot;

for the intercession of Christ preventeth.* Ro. vi. 7-10.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. Whatever the law can take hold of to curse us for, that Christ has redeemed us from, by being made a curse for us. But this curse that Christ was made for us, must be confined to his sufferings, not to his exaltation, and, consequently, not to his intercession, for Christ is made no curse but when he suffered; not in his intercession: so then, as he died he took away the curse, and sin that was the cause thereof, by the sacrifice of himself, *Gal. iii. 13*, and by his life, his intercession, he saveth us from all those things that attempt to bring us into that condemnation again.

The salvation, then, that we have by the intercession of Christ, as was said—I speak now of them that are capable of receiving comfort and relief by this doctrine—is salvation that follows upon, or that comes after, justification. We that are saved as to justification of life, need yet to be saved with that that preserveth to glory; for though by the death of Christ we are saved from the curse of the law, yet attempts are made by

* What can withstand the will of Christ, that all his should behold and partake of his glory? He is the Captain of salvation, has subdued all our enemies for us, and will destroy their power in us, and, ere long, put our last enemy, death, under *his feet*.—*Mason*.

many that we may be kept from the glory that justified persons are designed for; and from these we are saved by his intercession.

A man, then, that must be eternally saved is to be considered, (a.) As an heir of wrath. (b.) As an heir of God. An heir of wrath he is in himself by sin; an heir of God he is by grace through Christ. Ep. ii. 3. Ga. iv. 7. Now, as an heir of wrath he is redeemed, and as an heir of God he is preserved; as an heir of wrath he is redeemed by blood, and as an heir of God he is preserved by this intercession. Christ by his death, then, puts me, I being reconciled to God thereby, into a justified state, and God accepts me to grace and favour through him. But this doth not hinder but that, all this notwithstanding, there are, that would frustrate me of the end to which I am designed by this reconciliation to God, by redemption through grace; and from the accomplishing of this design I am saved by the blessed intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Object. 1. Perhaps some may say, we are not saved from all punishment of sin by the death of Christ; and if so, so not from all danger of damnation by the intercession of Christ.

Ans. We are saved from all punishment in hell fire by the death of Christ. Jesus has 'delivered us from the wrath to come.' 1.Th. i. 10. So that as to this great punishment, God for his sake has

forgiven us all trespasses. Col. ii. 13. But we being translated from being slaves to Satan to be sons of God, God reserveth yet this liberty in his hand to chastise us if we offend, as a father chastiseth his son. De. viii. 5. But this chastisement is not in legal wrath, but in fatherly affection; not to destroy us, but that still we might be made to get advantage thereby, even be made partakers of his holiness. This is, that we might 'not be condemned with the world.' He. xii. 5-11. 1 Co. xi. 32. As to the second part of the objection; there do, as we say, many things happen betwixt or between the cup and the lip; many things attempt to overthrow the work of God, and to cause that we should perish through our weakness, notwithstanding the price that hath by Christ been paid for us. But what saith the Scripture? 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, *which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*' Ro. viii. 35-39.

Thus the apostle reckoneth up all the disadvantages that a justified person is incident to in this life, and by way of challenge declares, that not any one of them, nor all together, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, that is towards us by Christ, his death, and his intercession.

Object. 2. It may be further objected, that the apostle doth here leave out sin, unto which we know the saints are subject, after justification. And sin of itself, we need no other enemies, is of that nature as to destroy the whole world.

Answ. Sin is sin, in the nature of sin, wherever it is found. But sin as to the damning effects thereof is taken away from them unto whom righteousness is imputed for justification. Nor shall any or all the things aforementioned, though there is a tendency in every one of them to drive us unto sin, drown us, through it, in perdition and destruction. I am persuaded, says Paul, they shall never be able to do that. The apostle, therefore, doth implicitly, though not expressly, challenge sin, yea, sin by all its advantages; and then glorieth in the love of God in Christ Jesus, from which he concludeth it shall never separate the justified. Besides, it would now have been needless to have expressly here put in sin by itself, seeing before, he had argued that those he speaks of were freely justified therefrom.

One word more before I go to the second head.

The Father, as I told you, has reserved to himself a liberty to chastise his sons, to wit, with temporal chastisements, if they offend. This still abideth to us, notwithstanding God's grace, Christ's death, or blessed intercession. And this punishment is so surely entailed to the transgressions that we who believe shall commit, that it is impossible that we should be utterly freed therefrom; insomuch that the apostle positively concludeth them to be bastards, what pretences to sonship soever they have, that are not, for sin, partakers of fatherly chastisements.

For the reversing of this punishment it is that we should pray, if perhaps God will remit it, when we are taught to say, 'Our Father, forgive us our trespasses.' And he that admits of any other sense as to this petition, derogates from the death of Christ, or faith, or both. For either he concludes that for some of his sins Christ did not die, or that he is bound to believe that God, though he did, has not yet, nor will forgive them, till from the petitioner some legal work be done; forgive us, as we forgive them that trespass against us. *Mat. vi. 14, 15.* But now, apply this to temporal punishments, and then it is true that God has reserved a liberty in his hand to punish even the sins of his people upon them; yea, and will not pardon their sin, as to the remitting of such punishment, unless *some good work* by them be done; 'If ye forgive

not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' Mat. vi. 15; xvil. 28—35.

And this is the cause why some that belong to God are yet so under the afflicting hand of God; they have sinned, and God, who is their Father, punisheth; yea, and this is the reason why some who are dear to God have this kind of punishment never forgiven, but it abides with them to their lives' end, goes with them to the day of their death, yea, is the very cause of their death. By this punishment they are cut off out of the land of the living. But all this is that they might 'not be condemned with the world.' 1 Co. xi. 32.

Christ died not to save from this punishment; Christ intercedes not to save from this punishment. Nothing but a good life will save from this punishment; nor always that either.

The hidings of God's face, the harshness of his providences, the severe and sharp chastisements that oftentimes overtake the very spirits of his people, plainly show that Christ died not to save from temporal punishments, prays not to save from temporal punishments—that is, absolutely. God has reserved a power to punish, with temporal punishments, the best and dearest of his people, if need be.* And sometimes he remits them, sometimes

* One proof of a future state of rewards is, that many of God's dearest saints have been most bitterly persecuted all their

not, even as it pleases him. I come now to the second thing.

[*Christ saves to the uttermost.*]

Second, I shall now show you something of what it is for Christ, by his intercession, to save to the '*uttermost.*' 'He is able to save them to the uttermost.'

This is a great expression, and carrieth with it much. 'Uttermost' signifieth to the outside, to the end, to the last, to the furthest part. And it hath respect both to persons and things. Ge. xlix. 26.

De. xxx. 4. Mat. v. 26. Mar. xiii. 27. Lu. xv.

1. To persons. Some persons are in their own apprehensions even further from Christ than anybody else; afar off, a great way off, yet a-coming, as the prodigal was. Now, these many times are exceedingly afraid; the sight of that distance that they think is betwixt Christ and them makes them afraid. As it is said in another case, 'They that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens.' Ps. lxxv. 8. So these are afraid they shall not speed, not obtain that for which they come to God. But the text says, He is able to save to the

lives, and martyred with extreme cruelty. Thus it was with the greatest man this country ever saw—William Tyndale, to whom the world is indebted for our translation of the Bible. See his letters, in his Memoir by the Editor, prefixed to a *reprint of the first English New Testament.*—Ed.

uttermost, to the very hindermost, them that come to God by him.

Two sorts of men seem to be far, very far from God. (1.) The town sinner. (2.) The great backslider. *No. 1. 9.* But both these, if they come, he is able to save to the uttermost. He is able to save them from all those dangers that they fear will prevent their obtaining of that grace and mercy they would have to help them in time of need. The publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven.

2. As this text respecteth persons, so it respecteth things. There are some things with which some are attended that are coming to God, by Christ, that make their coming hard and very difficult.

(1.) There is a more than ordinary breaking up of the corruptions of their nature. It seems as if all their lusts and vile passions of the flesh were become masters, and might now do what they will with the soul. Yea, they take this man and toss and tumble him like a ball in a large place. This man is not master of himself, of his thoughts, nor of his passions—‘His iniquities, like the wind, do carry him away.’ *Is. lxi. 6.* He thinks to go forward, but this wind blows him backward; he laboureth against this wind, but cannot find that he getteth ground; he takes what advantage opportunity doth minister to him, but all he gets is to

be beat out of heart, out of breath, out of courage. He stands still, and pants, and gapeth as for life. 'I opened my mouth, and panted,' said David, 'for I longed for thy commandments.' Ps. cxix. 131. He sets forward again, but has nothing but labour and sorrow.

(2.) Nay, to help forward his calamity, Satan [and his] angels will not be wanting, both to trouble his head with the fumes of their stinking breath, nor to throw up his heels in their dirty places—'And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down and tare *him*.' Lu. ix. 42. How many strange, hideous, and amazing blasphemies have those, some of those, that are coming to Christ, had injected and fixed upon their spirits against him. Nothing so common to such, as to have some hellish wish or other against God they are coming to, and against Christ, by whom they would come to him. These blasphemies are like those frogs that I have heard of, that will leap up, and catch hold of, and hang by their claws. Now help, Lord; now, Lord Jesus, what shall I do? Now, Son of David, have mercy upon me! I say, to say these words is hard work for such an one. But he is able to save to the uttermost this comer to God by him.

(3.) There are also the oppositions of sense and reason hard at work for the devil, against the soul; *the men of his own house are risen up against him.*

One's sense and reason, one would think, should not fall in with the devil against ourselves, and yet nothing more common, nothing more natural, than for our own sense and reason to turn the unnatural, and war both against our God and us. And now it is hard coming to God. Better can a man hear and deal with any objections against himself, than with those that himself doth make against himself. They lie close, stick fast, speak aloud, and will be heard; yea, will haunt and hunt him, as the devil doth some, in every hole and corner. But come, man, come; for he is able to save to the uttermost!

(4.) Now guilt is the consequence and fruit of all this; and what so intolerable a burden as guilt! They talk of the stones, and of the sands of the sea; but it is guilt that breaks the heart with its burden. And Satan has the art of making the uttermost of every sin; he can blow it up, make it swell, make every hair of its head as big as a cedar. He can tell how to make it a heinous offence, an unpardonable offence, an offence of that continuance, and committed against so much light, that, says he, it is impossible it should ever be forgiven. But, soul, Christ is able to save to the uttermost, he can 'do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' Ep. iii. 20.

(5.) Join to all this the rage and terror of men, which thing of itself is sufficient to quash and break to pieces all desires to come to God by Christ; yea,

and it doth do so to thousands that are not willing to go to hell. Yet thou art kept, and made to go panting on; a whole world of men, and devils, and sin, are not able to keep thee from coming. But how comes it to pass that thou art so hearty, that thou settest thy face against so much wind and weather? I dare say it arises not from thyself, nor from any of thine enemies. This comes from God, though thou art not aware thereof; and is obtained for thee by the intercession of the blessed Son of God, who is also able to save thee to the uttermost, that comest to God by him.

(6.) And for a conclusion as to this, I will add, that there is much of the honour of the Lord Jesus engaged as to the saving of the *coming* man to the uttermost: 'I am glorified in them,' saith he. Jn. xvii. 10. He is exalted to be a Saviour. Ac. v. 31. And if the blessed One doth count it an exaltation to be a Saviour, surely it is an exaltation to be a Saviour, and a great one. 'They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.' Is. xlix. 20. If it is a glory to be a Saviour, a great Saviour, then it is a glory for a Saviour, a great one, to save, and save, and save to the uttermost—to the uttermost man, to the uttermost sin, to the uttermost temptation. And hence it is that he saith again, speaking of the *transgressions, sins, and iniquities* that he would pardon,

that it should turn to him for 'a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all nations.' Jer. xxxiii. 9. He therefore counts it an honour to be a great Saviour, to save men to the uttermost.

When Moses said, 'I beseech thee, show me thy glory,' the answer was, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.' Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19. And when he came indeed to make proclamation, then he proclaimed, 'The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*.' Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. That will by no means clear them that will not come to me that they may be saved.

See here, if it is not by himself accounted his glory to make his goodness, all his goodness, pass before us. And how can that be, if he saveth not to the uttermost them that come unto God by him? For goodness is by us noways seen but by those acts by which it expresseth itself to be so. And, I am sure, to save, to save to the uttermost, is one of the most eminent expressions by which we understand it is great goodness. I know goodness has many ways to express itself to be what it is to the world; but then it expresseth its greatness when it pardons and saves, when it pardons and saves to the uttermost. My goodness, says Christ,

extends not itself to my Father, but to my saints. Ps. xvi. 2, 3. My Father has no need of my goodness, but my saints have, and therefore it shall reach forth itself for their help, in whom is all my delight. And, 'Oh how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!' Ps. xxxi. 19. It is therefore that which tendeth to get Christ a name, a fame, and glory, to be able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him.

[*In Christ's ability to save, lieth our safety.*]

But some may say, What is the meaning of this word *able*? 'Wherefore he is *able* to save.' He is able to save to the uttermost. How comes it to pass that his power to save is rather put in than his willingness; for willingness, saith the soul, would better have pleased me. I will speak two or three words to this question. And,

First, By this word *able* is suggested to us the sufficiency of his merit, the great worthiness of his merit; for, as Intercessor, he sticks fast by his merit; all his petitions, prayers, or supplications are grounded upon the worthiness of his person as Mediator, and on the validity of his offering as priest. This is the more clear, if you consider the reason why those priests and sacrifices under the *law could not* make the worshippers perfect. It

was, I say, because there wanted in them worthiness and merit in their sacrifices. But this man, when he came and offered his sacrifice, he did by that one act 'perfect for ever them that are sanctified,' or set apart for glory. 'But this *man*, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.' He. x. 1-12.

When Moses prayed for the people of Israel, thus he said, 'And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken.' But what had he spoken? 'The LORD is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing *the guilty* - Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.' Nu. xiv. 17-19.

Second, Has he but power, we know he is willing, else he would not have promised; it is also his glory to pardon and save. So, then, in his *ability* lies our safety. What if he were never so willing, if he were not of ability sufficient, what would his willingness do? But he has showed, as I said, his willingness by promising: 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' Jn. vi. 37. So that now our comfort lies in his power, in that he is able to make good his word. Ro. iv. 20, 21. And this also will then be seen, when he hath saved them that come to God by him, when he hath saved them to

the uttermost; not to the uttermost of his ability, but to the uttermost of our necessity; for to the uttermost of his ability I believe he will never be put to it to save his church; not for that he is loath *so* to save, but because there is no need *so* to save; he shall not need to put out all his power, and to press the utmost of his merit for the saving of his church. Alas! there is sufficiency of merit in him to save a thousand times as many more as are like to be saved by him; 'he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' Measure not, therefore, what he can do by what he has, doth, or will do; neither do thou interpret this word, to the *uttermost*, as if it related to the uttermost of his ability, but rather as it relateth, for so it doth indeed, to the greatness of thy necessity. For as he is able to save thee, though thy condition be, as it may be supposed to be, the worst that ever man was in that was saved, so he is able to save thee, though thy condition were ten times worse than it is.

What! shall not the worthiness of the Son of God be sufficient to save from the sin of man? or shall the sin of the world be of that weight to destroy, that it shall put Christ Jesus to the uttermost of the worth of his person and merit to save therefrom? I believe it is blasphemy to think so. We can easily imagine that he can save all the *world—that is*, that he is of ability to do it; but

we cannot imagine that he can do no more than we can think he can. But our imagination and thoughts set no bound to his ability. 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' But what that is, I say, no man can think, no man can imagine. So, then, Jesus Christ can do more than ever any man thought he could do as to saving; he can do we know not what. This, therefore, should encourage comers to come to him; and them that come, to hope. This, I say, should encourage them to let out, to lengthen, and heighten their thoughts by the word, to the uttermost, seeing he can 'save to the uttermost them that come to God by him.'*

[*Inferences from the benefits of Christ's intercession.*]

Third. And now I come to the third thing that I told you I should speak to, and that is, to *those inferences that may be gathered from these words.*

1. Are they that are justified by Christ's blood such as have need yet to be saved by his intercession? *Then from hence it follows that justification will stand with imperfection.* It doth not therefore

* 'The uttermost.' How boundless! It includes all that wondrous extent of Divine love which we shall be ever learning, and never be able to comprehend, the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.—
ED.

follow that a justified man is without infirmity ; for he that is without infirmity—that is, perfect with absolute perfection, has no need to be yet saved by an act yet to be performed by a mediator and his mediation.

When I say, justification will stand with imperfection, I do not mean that it will allow, countenance, or approve thereof ; but I mean there is no necessity of our perfection, of our personal perfection, as to our justification, and that we are justified without it ; yea, that that, in justified persons, remains. Again ; when I say that justification will stand with imperfection, I do not mean that in our justification we are imperfect ; for in that we are complete ; ‘ we are complete in him ’ who is our justice. Col. ii. 10. If otherwise, the imperfection is in the matter that justifieth us, which is the righteousness of Christ. Yea, and to say so would conclude that wrong judgment proceedeth from him that imputeth that righteousness to us to justification, since an imperfect thing is imputed to us for justification. But far be it from any that believe that God is true to imagine such a thing ; all his works are perfect, there is nothing wanting in them as to the present design.

[*Quest.*] But what then do we mean when we say, justification will stand with a state of imperfection ?

Answ. Why, I mean that justified men are yet

sinners in themselves, are yet full of imperfections; yea, sinful imperfections. Justified Paul said, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.' Ro. vii. 18. While we are yet sinners, we are justified by the blood of Christ. Hence, again, it is said, 'he justifieth the ungodly.' Ro. iv. 5; v. 8, 9. Justification, then, only covereth our sin from the sight of God; it maketh us not perfect with inherent perfection. But God, for the sake of that righteousness which by his grace is imputed to us, declareth us quit and discharged from the curse, and sees sin in us no more to condemnation.

[WHY THE JUSTIFIED NEED AN INTERCESSOR.]

And this is the reason, or one reason, why they that are justified have need of an intercessor—to wit, to save us from the evil of the sin that remains in our flesh after we are justified by grace through Christ, and set free from the law as to condemnation. Therefore, as it is said, we are saved; so it is said, 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' The godly, for now we will call them the godly, though there is yet abundance of sin in them, feel in themselves many things even after justification by which they are convinced they are still attended with personal, sinful imperfections.

[*Imperfect in their feelings and inclinations.*]

(1.) They feel unbelief, fear, mistrust, doubting, despondings, murmurings, blasphemies, pride, lightness, foolishness, avarice, fleshly lusts, heartlessness to good, wicked desires, low thoughts of Christ, too good thoughts of sin, and, at times, too great an itching after the worst of immoralities.

(2.) They feel in themselves an aptness to incline to errors, as to lean to the works of the law for justification; to question the truth of the resurrection and judgment to come; to dissemble and play the hypocrite in profession and in performance of duties; to do religious duties rather to please man than God, who trieth the heart.

(3.) They feel an inclination in them, in times of trial, to faint under the cross, to seek too much to save themselves, to dissemble the known truth for the obtaining a little favour with men, and to speak things that they ought not, that they may sleep in a whole skin.

(4.) They feel wearisomeness in religious duties, but a natural propensity to things of the flesh. They feel a desire to go beyond bounds both at board, and bed, and bodily exercise, and in all lawful recreation.

(5.) They feel in themselves an aptness to take the advantage of using of things that are lawful, as food, raiment, sleep, talk, estates, relations, beauty, *rit, parts,* and *graces*, to unlawful ends. These

things, with many more of the like kind, the justified man finds and feels in himself, to his humbling and often casting down; and to save him from the destroying evil of these, Christ ever liveth to make intercession for him.

[*Imperfect in their graces.*].—Again; the justified man is imperfect in his graces, and therefore needeth to be saved by the intercession of Christ from the bad fruit that that imperfection yields.

Justifying righteousness is accompanied with graces—the graces of the Spirit. Though these graces are not that matter by and through which we are justified, nor any part thereof, that being only the obedience of Christ imputed to us of mere pleasure and good will; but, I say, they come when justification comes. Ro. ix. And though they are not so easily discerned at the first, they show forth themselves afterwards. But I say, how many soever they are, and how fast soever they grow, their utmost arrivement here is but a state short of perfection. None of the graces of God's Spirit in our hearts can do their work in us without shortness, and that because of their own imperfections, and also because of the oppositions that they meet with from our flesh.

(1.) Faith, which is the root-grace, the grand grace, its shortness is sufficiently manifest by its shortness of apprehension of things pertaining to the person, offices, relations, and works of Christ.

now in the heavenly place for us. It is also very defective in its fetching of comfort from the Word to us, and in continuing of it with us, when at any time we attain unto it; in its receiving of strength to subdue sin, and in its purifyings of the heart, though indeed it doth what it doth in reality, yet how short is it of doing of it thoroughly? Oftentimes, were it not for supplies by virtue of the intercession of Christ, faith would fail of performing its office in any measure. *Ln. xxi. 31, 32.*

(2.) There is hope, another grace of the Spirit bestowed upon us; and how often is that also, as to the excellency of working, made to flag? 'I shall perish,' saith David; 'I am cut off from before thine eyes,' said he. *Ps. xxi. 22.* And now where was his hope, in the right gospel discovery of it? Also all our fear of men, and fears of death, and fears of judgment, they arise from the imperfections of hope. But from all those faults Christ saves us by his intercessions.

(3.) There is love, that should be in us as hot as fire. It is compared to fire, to fire of the hottest sort; yea, it is said to be hotter than the coals of juniper. *Ca. viii. 6, 7.* But who finds this heat in love so much as for one poor quarter of an hour together? Some little flashes, perhaps, some at some times may feel, but where is that constant burning of affection that the Word, the love of God, and the love of Christ call for? yea, and that the

necessities of the poor and afflicted members of Christ call for also. Ah! love is cold in these frozen days, and short when it is at the highest.

(4.) The grace of humility, when is it? who has a thimbleful thereof? Where is he that is 'clothed with humility,' and that does what he is commanded 'with all humility of mind?' 1 Pe. v. 6.

Ac. xx. 19.

(5.) For zeal, where is that also? Zeal for God against sin, profaneness, superstition, and idolatry. I speak now to the godly, who have this zeal in the root and habit; but oh, how little of it puts forth itself into actions in such a day as this is!

(6.) There is reverence, fear, and standing in awe of God's Word and judgments, where are the excellent workings thereof to be found? And where it is most, how far short of perfect acts is it?

(7.) Simplicity and godly sincerity also, with how much dirt is it mixed in the best; especially among those of the saints that are rich, who have got the poor and beggarly art of complimenting? For the more compliment, the less sincerity. Many words will not fill a bushel. But 'in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.' Pr. x. 19. Plain men are thin come up in this day; to find a mouth without fraud and deceit now is a rare thing. Thus might one count up all the graces of the Spirit, and show wherein every one of them are scanty

and wanting of perfection. Now look, what they want of perfection is supplied with sin and vanity; for there is a fulness of sin and flesh at hand to make up all the vacant places in our souls. There is no place in the souls of the godly but it is filled up with darkness when the light is wanting, and with sin so far forth as grace is wanting. Satan, also, diligently waiteth to come in at the door, if Careless has left it a little achare.*

But, oh! the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and that, by so doing, saves us from all the imperfect acts and workings of our graces, and from all the advantages that flesh, and sin, and Satan getteth upon us thereby.

[*Imperfect in their Duties.*].—Further, as Christ Jesus our Lord doth save us, by his intercession, from that hurt that would unavoidably come upon us by these, so also, by that we are saved from the evil that is at any time found in any or all our holy duties and performances that is our duty daily to be found in. That our duties are imperfect, follows upon what was discoursed before; for if our graces be imperfect, how can our duties but be so too?

* 'Achare,' from to chare, to turn about, or backwards and forwards; as, achare woman, one who takes her turn at work; a door achare, or ajar, turning to and fro on its hinges; or standing partly open.—ED.

(1.) Our prayers, how imperfect are they! With how much unbelief are they mixed! How apt is our tongue to run, in prayer, before our hearts! With how much earnestness do our lips move, while our hearts lie within as cold as a clod! Yea, and oftentimes, it is to be feared, we ask for that with our mouth that we care not whether we have or no. Where is the man that pursues with all his might what but now he seemed to ask for with all his heart? Prayer is become a shell, a piece of formality, a very empty thing, as to the spirit and life of prayer at this day. I speak now of the prayers of the godly. I once met with a poor woman that, in the greatest of her distresses, told me she did use to rise in the night, in cold weather, and pray to God, while she sweat with fears of the loss of her prayer and desires that her soul might be saved. I have heard of many that have *played*, but of few that have *prayed*, till they have sweat, by reason of their wrestling with God for mercy in that duty.

(2.) There is the duty of almsgiving, another gospel performance; but how poorly is it done in our days! We have so many foolish ways to lay out money, in toys and fools' baubles for our children, that we can spare none, or very little, for the relief of the poor. Also, do not many give that to their dogs, yea, let it lie in their houses until it stinks so vilely that neither dog nor cat

will eat it; which, had it been bestowed well in time, might have been a succour and nourishment to some poor member of Christ?

(3.) There is hearing of the Word; but, alas! the place of hearing is the place of sleeping with many a fine professor. I have often observed that those that keep shops can briskly attend upon a twopenny customer; but when they come themselves to God's market, they spend their time too much in letting their thoughts to wander from God's commandments, or in a nasty drowsy way. The heads, also, and hearts of most hearers are to the Word as the sieve is to water; they can hold no sermons, remember no texts, bring home no proofs, produce none of the sermon to the edification and profit of others. And do not the best take up too much in hearing, and mind too little what, by the Word, God calls for at their hands, to perform it with a good conscience?

(4.) There is faithfulness in callings, faithfulness to brethren, faithfulness to the world, faithfulness to children, to servants, to all, according to our place and capacity. Oh! how little of it is there found in the mouths and lives, to speak nothing of the hearts, of professors.

I will proceed no further in this kind of repetition of things; only thus much give me leave to say over again, even many of the truly godly are *very faulty here*. But what would they do if there

were not one always at the right hand of God, by intercession, taking away these kind of iniquities?

2. Are those that are justified by the blood of Christ such, after that, as have need also of saving by Christ's intercession? From hence, then, we may infer, that as sin, so *Satan will not give over from assaulting the best of the saints.*

It is not justification that can secure us from being assaulted by Satan: 'Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you,' *Lu. xxii. 31, 32.* There are two things that do encourage the devil to set upon the people of God:—

(1.) He knows not who are elect; for all that profess are not, and, therefore, he will make trial, if he can get them into his sieve, whether he can cause them to perish. And great success he hath had this way. Many a brave professor has he overcome; he has cast some of the stars from heaven to earth; he picked one out from among the apostles, and one, as it is thought, from among the seven deacons,* and many from among Christ's disciples; but how many, think you, nowadays, doth he utterly destroy with his net?

(2.) If it so happeneth that he cannot destroy,

* It is supposed by some that 'Nicolas' was the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitanes, mentioned in *Re. ii. 6, 15*; but of this there is much doubt. See *Dr. Gill, and Matthew Henry on Ac. vi. 5.*—ED.

because Christ, by his intercession, prevaieth, yet will he set upon the church to defile and afflict it. For (a), If he can but get us to fall, with Peter, then he has obtained that dishonour be brought to God, the weak to be stumbled, the world offended, and the gospel vilified and reproached. Or (b), If he cannot throw up our heels, yet, by buffeting of us, he can grieve us, afflict us, put us to pain, fright us, drive us to many doubts, and make our life very uncomfortable unto us, and make us go groaning to our Father's house. But blessed be God for his Christ, and for that 'he ever liveth to make intercession for us.'

3. Are those that are justified by the blood of Christ such as, after that, have need to be saved by Christ's intercession? Then, hence I infer that *it is dangerous going about anything in our own name and strength*. If we would have helps from the intercession of Christ, let us have a care that we do what we do according to the word of Christ. Do what he bids us as well as we can, as he bids us, and then we need not doubt to have help and salvation in those duties by the intercession of Christ. 'Do all,' says the apostle, 'in the name of the Lord Jesus.' COL. III. 17. Oh, but then the devil and the world will be most of all offended! Well, well, but if you do nothing but as in his fear, by his Word, in his name, you may *be sure of what help his intercession can afford*

you, and that can afford you much help, not only to begin, but to go through with your work in some good measure, as you should; and by that also you shall be secured from those dangers, if not temptations to dangers, that those that go out about business in their own names and strength shall be sure to meet withal.

4. Are those that are justified by the blood of Christ such as, after that, have need of being saved by Christ's intercession? Then, hence I infer again, *that God has a great dislike of the sins of his own people, and would fall upon them in judgment and anger much more severely than he doth, were it not for Christ's intercession.* The gospel is not, as some think, a loose and licentious doctrine, nor God's discipline of his church a negligent and careless discipline; for, though those that believe already have also an intercessor, yet God, to show his detestation against sin, doth often make them feel to purpose the weight of his fingers. The sincere, that fain would walk oft with God, have felt what I say, and that to the breaking of their bones full oft. The loose ones, and those that God loves not, may be utter strangers as to this; but those that are his own indeed do know it is otherwise.* 'You only have I known' above all

* A godly man's prayers are sometimes answered by terrible things in righteousness. He prays to be quickened in his

others, says God, 'therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.' Am. iii. 2. God keeps a very strict house among his children. David found it so, Haman found it so, Job found it so, and the church of God found it so; and I know not that his mind is ever the less against sin, notwithstanding we have an Intercessor. True, our Intercessor saves us from damning evils, from damning judgments; but he neither doth nor will secure us from temporal punishment, from spiritual punishment, unless we watch, deny ourselves, and walk in his fear. I would to God that those who are otherwise minded did but feel, for three or four months, something of what I have felt for several years together for base sinful *thoughts*! I wish it, I say, if it might be for their good, and for the better regulating of their understandings. But whether they obtain my wish or no, sure I am that God is no countenancer of sin; no, not in his own people; nay, he will bear it least of all in them. And as for others, however he may for a while have patience towards them, if, perhaps, his goodness may lead them to repentance; yet the day is coming when he will pay the carnal and hypocrites' home with devouring fire for their offences.

walk with God; and the answer, dictated by wisdom and love, is the loss of some temporal blessing, that he may be kept '*looking unto Jesus*,'—ED.

But if our holy God will not let us go altogether unpunished, though we have so able and blessed an Intercessor, that has always to present God with, on our behalf, so valuable a price of his own blood, now before the throne of grace, what should we have done if there had been no day's-man, none to plead for us, or to make intercession on our behalf? Read that text, 'For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.' Je. xxx. 11. If it be so, I say, what had become of us, if we had had no Intercessor? And what will become of them concerning whom the Lord has said already, 'I will not take up their names into my lips?' Ps. xvi. 4. 'I pray not for the world.' Jn. xvii. 9.

5. Are those that are already justified by the blood of Christ yet such as have need of being saved by his intercession? Then, hence, I infer that *Christ is not only the beginner, but the completer of our salvation*; or, as the Holy Ghost calls him; 'the author and finisher of *our* faith,' He. xii. 2; or, as it calls him again, 'the author of eternal salvation.' He. v. 9. Of salvation throughout, from the beginning to the end, from first to last. His hands have laid the foundation of it in his own blood, and his hands shall finish it by his inter-

cession. Zec. iv. 2. As he has laid the beginning fastly, so he shall bring forth the headstones with shoutings, and we shall cry, Grace, grace, at the last, salvation only belongeth to the Lord. Zec. iv. 7. Ps. llii. 8. Is. xliii. 11.

Many there be that begin with grace, and end with works, and think THAT is the only way. Indeed works will save from temporal punishments, when their imperfections are purged from them by the intercession of Christ; but to be saved and brought to glory, to be carried through this dangerous world, from my first moving after Christ till I set my foot within the gates of paradise, this is the work of my Mediator, of my high priest and intercessor; it is he that fetches us again when we are run away; it is he that lifteth us up when the devil and sin has thrown us down; it is he that quickeneth us when we grow cold; it is he that comforteth us when we despair; it is he that obtains fresh pardon when we have contracted sin; and he that purges our consciences when they are loaden with guilt. Eze. xxxiv. 16. Ps. cxlv. 14

I know also, that rewards do wait for them in heaven that do believe in Christ, and shall do well on earth; but this is not a reward of merit, but of grace. We are saved by Christ; brought to glory by Christ; and all our works are no otherwise made acceptable to God but by the person and personal excellencies and works of Christ;

therefore, whatever the jewels are, and the bracelets, and the pearls, that thou shalt be adorned with as a reward of service done to God in the world, for them thou must thank Christ, and, before all, confess that he was the meritorious cause thereof. 1 Pe. ii. 5. He. xiii. 15. He saves us, and saves our services too. Re. v. 9-14. They would be all cast back as dung in our faces, were they not rinsed and washed in the blood, were they not sweetened and perfumed in the incense, and conveyed to God himself through the white hand of Jesus Christ; for that is his golden censer; from thence ascends the smoke that is in the nostrils of God of such a sweet savour. Re. vii. 12-14; viii. 3, 4.

6. Are those that are already justified by the blood of Christ, such as do still stand in need of being saved by his intercession? Then hence I infer again, that *we that have been saved hitherto, and preserved from the dangers that we have met with since our first conversion to this moment, should ascribe the glory to Jesus Christ, to God by Jesus Christ.* 'I have prayed that thy faith fail not: I pray that thou wouldest keep them from the evil,' is the true cause of our standing, and of our continuing in the faith and holy profession of the gospel to this very day. Wherefore we must give the glory of all to God by Christ: 'I will not trust in my bow,' said David, 'neither shall my sword save me. But thou hast saved us from our ene-

mies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah !' 'He always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' 'We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Ps. xlv. 6-8. 2 Co. ii. 14. Phi. iii. 3. Thus you see that, both in the Old and New Testament, all the glory is given to the Lord, as well for preservation to heaven as for justification of life. And he that is well acquainted with himself will do this readily; though light heads, and such as are not acquainted with the desperate evil that is in their natures, will sacrifice to their own net. But such will so sacrifice but a while. Sir Death is coming, and he will put them into the view of what they see not now, and will feed sweetly upon them, because they made not the Lord their trust. And therefore, ascribe thou the glory of the preservation of thy soul in the faith hitherto, to that salvation which Christ Jesus our Lord obtaineth for thee by his intercession.

7. Are those that are already justified by the blood of Christ such as do still stand in need of being saved by his intercession? Then is this also to be inferred from hence, *that saints should look to him for that saving that they shall yet have need of betwixt this and the day of their dissolution; yea, from henceforward, even to the day of judgment. I say, they should still look to him for the remaining part of their salvation, or for that of*

their salvation which is yet behind; and let them look for it with confidence, for that it is in a faithful hand; and for thy encouragement to look and hope for the completing of thy salvation in glory, let me present thee with a few things—

(1.) The hardest or worst part of the work of thy Saviour is over; his bloody work, his bearing of thy sin and curse, his loss of the light of his Father's face for a time; his dying upon the cursed tree, that was the worst, the sorest, the hardest, and most difficult part of the work of redemption; and yet this he did willingly, cheerfully, and without thy desires; yea, this he did, as considering those for whom he did it in a state of rebellion and enmity to him.

(2.) Consider, also, that he has made a beginning with thy soul to reconcile thee to God, and to that end has bestowed his justice upon thee, put his Spirit within thee, and began to make the unweldable mountain and rock,* thy heart, to turn

* The heart 'unweldable.' This homely allusion, drawn from Bunyan's trade of blacksmith, is worthy of remark. The heart a mountain of iron, so hard that no heat in nature can soften it so as to weld it to Christ. *To weld* is to hammer into firm union two pieces of iron, when heated almost to fusion, so as to become *one piece*. The heart of man is by nature 'unweldable,' until God the Spirit softens it; and then the union is such that Christ becomes *THE LIFE* of his saints. Reader, has thy heart passed through this process?—ED.

towards him, and desire after him; to believe in him, and rejoice in him.

3.) Consider, also, that some comfortable pledges of his love thou hast already received, namely, as to feel the sweetness of his love, as to see the light of his countenance, as to be made to know his power in raising of thee when thou wast down, and how he has made thee stand, while hell has been pushing at thee, utterly to overthrow thee.

(4.) Thou mayest consider, also, that what remains behind of the work of thy salvation in his hands, as it is the most easy part, so the most comfortable, and that part which will more immediately issue in his glory, and therefore he will mind it.

(5.) That which is behind is also more safe in his hand than if it were in thine own; he is wise, he is powerful, he is faithful, and therefore will manage that part that is lacking to our salvation well, until he has completed it. It is his love to thee that has made him that 'he putteth no trust in thee;' he knows that he can himself bring thee to his kingdom most surely; and therefore has not left that work to thee, no, not any part thereof.

Job v. 18; xv. 15.

Live in hope, then, in a lively hope, that since Christ is risen from the dead, he lives to make intercession for thee, and that thou shalt reap the *blessed benefit* of this twofold salvation that is

wrought, and that is working out for thee, by Jesus Christ our Lord. And thus have we treated of the benefit of his intercession, in that he is able to save to the uttermost. And this leads me to the third particular.

[III. THE PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.]

THIRD, The third particular is to show WHO ARE THE PERSONS INTERESTED IN THIS INTERCESSION OF CHRIST; and they are *those that come to God by him*. The words are very concise, and distinctly laid down; they are they that come, that come to God, that come to God by him. 'Wherefore he is able also to save them, to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

[*Of coming to God by Christ.*].—A little, first, to comment upon the order of the words, 'that come unto God by him.'

There are that come unto God, *but not 'by him';* and these are not included in this text, have not a share in this privilege. Thus the Jews came to God, the unbelieving Jews, 'who had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' Ro. ix. 30-34; x. 1-4. These submitted not to Christ, the righteousness of God, but thought to come to him by works of their own, or at least, as it were, by

them, and so came short of salvation by grace, for that reigns to salvation only in Christ. To these Christ's person and undertakings were a stumbling stone; for at him they stumbled, and did split themselves to pieces, though they indeed were such as came to God for life.

As there are that come to God, but not by Christ, so *there are that come to Christ, but not to God by him:** of this sort are they, who hearing that Christ is Saviour, therefore come to him for pardon, but cannot abide to come to God by him, for that he is holy, and so will snub their lusts, and will change their hearts and natures. Mind me what I say. There are a great many that would be saved by Christ, but love not to be sanctified by God through him. These make a stop at Christ, and will go no further. Might such have pardon, they care not whether ever they went to heaven or no. Of this kind of coming to Christ I think it is, of which he warneth his disciples when he saith, 'In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' Jn. xvi. 23.

* This is a solemn and heart-searching consideration. It is not enough that we fear eternal wrath, but we must love heaven, for the sake of its purity. It is not sufficient that we go to Christ for pardon, but we must go through him to the *infinitely holy God*, for holiness and fitness for heaven.—ED.

As who should say, when you ask for anything, make not a stop at me, but come to my Father by me; for they that come to me, and not to my Father, through me, will have nothing of what they come for. Righteousness shall be imputed to us, 'if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.' Ro. iv. 24, 25. To come to Christ for a benefit, and stop there, and not come to God by him, prevaileth nothing. Here the mother of Zebedee's children erred; and about this it was that the Lord Jesus cautioned her. Lord, saith she, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.' But what is the answer of Christ? 'To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father.' Mat. xx. 21-23. As who should say, Woman, of myself I do nothing, my Father worketh with me. Go therefore to him by me, for I am the way to him; what thou canst obtain of him by me thou shalt have; that is to say, what of the things that pertain to eternal life, whether pardon or glory.

It is true, the Son has power to give pardon and glory, but he gives it not by himself, but by and according to the will of his Father. Mat. ix. 6. Jn. xvii. 22. They, therefore, that come to him for an eternal good, and look not to the Father by him, come short thereof; I mean, now, pardon and

glory. And hence, though it be said the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins—to wit, to show the certainty of his Godhead, and of the excellency of his mediation; yet forgiveness of sin is said to lie more particularly in the hand of the Father, and that God for Christ's sake forgiveth us. Ep. iv. 32.

The Father, as we see, will not forgive unless we come to him by the Son. Why, then, should we conceit that the Son will forgive those that come not to the Father by him?

So then, justifying righteousness is in the Son, and with him also is intercession; but forgiveness is with the Father; yea, the gift of the Holy Ghost, yea, and the power of imputing of the righteousness of Christ is yet in the hand of the Father. Hence Christ prays to the Father to forgive, prays to the Father to send the Spirit, and it is God that imputeth righteousness to justification to us. Lu. xxiii. 34. Jn. xiv. 16. Ro. iv. 6. The Father, then, doth nothing but for the sake of and through the Son; the Son also doth nothing derogating from the glory of the Father. But it would be a derogation to the glory of the Father if the Son should grant to save them that come not to the Father by him; wherefore you that cry Christ, Christ, delighting yourselves in the thoughts of forgiveness, but care not to come by Christ to the *Father for it*, you are not at all concerned in this

blessed text, for he only saves by his intercession them that come to God by him.

• There are three sorts of people that may be said to come to Christ, but not to God by him.

1. They whose utmost design in coming is only that guilt and fear of damning may be removed from them. And there are three signs of such an one—(1.) He that takes up in a belief of pardon, and so goes on in his course of carnality as he did before. (2.) He whose comfort in the belief of pardon standeth alone, without other fruits of the Holy Ghost. (3.) He that, having been washed, can be content to tumble in the mire, as the sow again, or as the dog that did spue to lick up his vomit again.

2. They may be said to come to Christ, but not to God by him, who do pick and choose doctrines, itching only after that which sounds of grace,* but secretly abhorring of that which presseth to

* There has been, in every age, professors who, instead of gratefully receiving and obeying the *whole* truth, have indulged in favourite doctrines. Happy is that Christian who equally loves to hear Christ set forth as a priest and sacrifice, or to dwell upon his power and authority as king and lawgiver; who delights as much in holy obedience as in electing love. The saints are bound to bear with each other, never forgetting that they are members of one family, and must cherish and comfort one another, as we hope to enjoy fellowship with heaven and the smiles of the great Head of the church.—ED.

moral goodness. These did never see God, what notions soever they may have of the Lord Jesus, and of forgiveness from him. Mat. v. 8.

3. They surely did never come to God by Christ, however they may boast of the grace of Christ, that will from the freeness of gospel grace plead an indulgence for sin.

[*Manner of coming to God.*.]—And now to speak a few words of coming to God, or coming as the text intends. And in speaking to this, I must touch upon two things—1. Concerning God. 2. Concerning the frame of the heart of him that comes to him.

1. Of God. God is the chief good. Good so as nothing is but himself. He is in himself most happy; yea, all good; and all true happiness is only to be found in God, as that which is essential to his nature; nor is there any good or any happiness in or with any creature or thing but what is communicated to it by God. God is the only desirable good, nothing without him is worthy of our hearts. Right thoughts of God are able to ravish the heart; how much more happy is the man that has interest in God. God alone is able by himself to put the soul into a more blessed, comfortable, and happy condition than can the whole world; yea, and more than if all the created happiness of all the angels of heaven did dwell in *one man's bosom*. God is the upholder of all

creatures, and whatever they have that is a suitable good to their kind, it is from God; by God all things have their subsistence, and all the good that they enjoy. I cannot tell what to say; I am drowned! The life, the glory, the blessedness, the soul-satisfying goodness that is in God is beyond all expression.

2. Now there must be in us something of a suitableness of spirit to this God before we can be willing to come to him.

Before, therefore, God has been with a man, and has left some impression of his glory upon him, that man cannot be willing to come to him aright. Hence it is said concerning Abraham, that, in order to his coming to God, and following of him aright, the Lord himself did show himself unto him—‘Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee.’ Ac. vii. 2, 3. Ge. xii. 1.

It was this God of glory, the sight and visions of this God of glory, that provoked Abraham to leave his country and kindred to come after God. The reason why men are so careless of, and so indifferent about, their coming to God, is because they have their eyes blinded, because they do not perceive his glory. God is so blessed a one, that

did he not hide himself and his glory, the whole world would be ravished with him. But he has, I will not say reasons of state, but reasons of glory, glorious reasons why he hideth himself from the world, and appeareth but to particular ones. Now by his thus appearing to Abraham, down fell Abraham's vanity, and his idolatrous fancies and affections, and his heart began to turn unto God, for that there was in this appearance an alluring and soul-instructing voice. Hence that which Moses calls here an *appearing*, Christ calls a *hearing*, and a *teaching*, and a *learning*—'It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me,' that is, to God by me. But, I say, what must they hear and learn of the Father but that Christ is the way to glory, the way to the God of glory. This is a drawing doctrine; wherefore that which in this verse is called *teaching* and *learning*, is called, in the verse before, the *drawing* of the Father—'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him;' that is, with powerful proposals, and alluring conclusions, and heart-subduing influences. Jn. vi. 44, 45.

Having thus touched upon this, we will now proceed to show you what kind of people they are that come to God by Christ; and then shall draw *some* inferences from this also.

[*Who are the people that come to Christ.*]

There are, therefore, three sorts of people that come to God by Christ. *First*, Men newly awakened. *Second*, Men turned from backsliding. *Third*, The sincere and upright man.

[*Of the newly awakened coming to Christ.*]

First, Men newly awakened. By awakened, I mean awakened thoroughly. So awakened as to be made to see themselves, what they are; the world, what it is; the law, what it is; hell, what it is; death, what it is; Christ, what he is; and God, what he is; and also what judgment is.

A man that will come to God by Christ aright must needs, precedent to his so coming, have a competent knowledge of things of this kind.

1. He must know himself, *what a wretched and miserable sinner he is*, before he will take one step forward in order to his coming to God by Christ. This is plain from a great many scriptures; as that of the parable of the prodigal, Lu. xv.; that of the three thousand, Ac. ii.; that of the jailer, Ac. xvi., and those of many more besides. The whole have no need of the physician. They were not the sound and whole, but the lame and diseased that came to him to be cured of their infirmities; and it is not the righteous, but the sinners that do well know themselves to be such, that come to God by Christ.

It is not in the power of all the men on earth to make one man come to God by Christ, because it is not in their power to make men see their state by nature. And what should a man come to God for, that can live in the world without him? Reason says so, experience says so, the Scripture beareth witness that so it is of a truth. It is a sight of what I am that must *unroost* me, that must shake my soul, and make me leave my present rest. No man comes to God by Christ but he that knows himself, and what sin hath done to him; that is the first. Job xxi. 7-15.

2. As he must know himself, and what a wretch he is, so *he must know the world, and what an empty thing it is.* Cain did see himself, but saw not the emptiness of this world; and therefore instead of going to God by Christ, he went to the world, and there did take up to his dying day. Ge. iv. 16. The world is a great snare to the soul, even to the souls of awakened sinners, by reason of its big looks, and the fair promises that it makes to those that will please to entertain it. It will also make as though it could do as much to the quieting of the spirit as either sermon, Bible, or preacher. Yea, and it has its followers ready at its heels continually to blow its applause abroad, saying, 'Who will show us *any* (other) good?' Ps. iv. 6. And though 'this their way *is* their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings.' Ps. xlii. 13.

So that unless a man, under some awakenings, sees the emptiness of the world, he will take up in the good things thereof, and not come to God by Christ. Many there be now in hell that can seal to this for truth. It was the world that took **awakened Cain, awakened Judas, awakened Demas.** Yea, Balaam, though he had some kind of visions of God, yet was kept by the world from coming to him aright. See with what earnestness the young man in the gospel came to Jesus Christ, and that for eternal life. He ran to him, he kneeled down to him, and asked, and that before a multitude, 'Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' **Mar. x. 17-24.** And yet when he was told he could not come, the world soon stepped betwixt that life and him, and persuaded him to take up in itself; and so, for aught we know, he never looked after life more.

There are four things in the world that have a tendency to lull an awakened man asleep, if God also makes him not afraid of the world.

(1.) There is the bustle and cumber of the world, that will call a man off from looking after the salvation of his soul. This is intimated by the parable of the thorny ground. **Lu. viii. 14.** Worldly cumber is a devilish thing; it will hurry a man from his bed without prayer; to a sermon, and from it again, without prayer; it will choke prayer, it will choke the Word, it will choke convictions,

it will choke the soul, and cause that awakening shall be to no saving purpose.

(2.) There is the friendship of this world, to which, if a man is not mortified, there is no coming for him to God by Christ. And a man can never be mortified to it unless he shall see the emptiness and vanity of it. Whosoever makes himself a friend of this world is the enemy of God. And how, then, can he come to him by Christ? *Ja. iv. 4.*

(3.) There are the terrors of the world, if a man stands in fear of them, he also will not come to God by Christ. The fear of man brings a snare. How many have, in all ages, been kept from coming to God aright by the terrors of the world? Yea, how many are there to one's thinking have almost got to the gates of heaven, and have been scared and driven quite back again by nothing but the terrors of this world? This is that which Christ so cautioneth his disciples about, for he knew it was a deadly thing. Peter also bids the saints beware of this as of a thing very destructive. *Lu. xii. 4-6. 1 Pe. iii. 14, 15.*

(4.) There is also the glory of the world, an absolute hinderance to convictions and awakenings, to wit, honours, and greatness, and preferments: 'How can ye believe,' said Christ, 'which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only.' *Jn. v. 44.* If therefore a man is not in his affections crucified to these, it will *keep him from coming to God aright.*

3. As a man must know himself, how vile he is, and know the world, how empty it is, so *he must know the law, how severe it is*; else he will not come to God by Jesus Christ our Lord.

A man that is under awakenings, is under a double danger of falling short of coming to God by Christ. If he knows not the severity of the law, he is either in danger of slighting its penalty, or of seeking to make amends to it by doing of good works; and nothing can keep him from splitting his soul upon one of these two rocks, but a sound knowledge of the severity of the law.

(1.) He is in danger of slighting the penalty. This is seen by the practice of all the profane in the world. Do they not know the law? Verily, many of them can say the Ten Commandments without book. But they do not know the severity of the law; and therefore when at any time awakenings come upon their consciences, they strive to drive away the guilt of one sin, by wallowing in the filth of another.

But would they do thus if they knew the severity of the law? they would as soon eat fire. The severity of the law would be an intolerable, insupportable burden to their consciences; it would drive them, and make them fly for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them.

(2.) Or if he slights not the penalty, he will seek to make amends to it by doing of good works for

the sins he has committed. This is manifest by the practice of the Jews and Turks, and all that swerve on that hand—to wit, to seek life and happiness by the law. Paul also was here before he met with Jesus in the way. This is natural to consciences that are awakened, unless also they have given to them to see the true severity of the law; the which that thou mayest do, if my mite will help, I will cast in for thy conviction these four things—

(a.) The law charges thee with its curse, as well for the pollution of thy nature, as for the defilements of thy life; yea, and if thou hadst never committed sinful act, thy pollution of nature must stand in thy way to life, if thou comest not to God for mercy by Christ.

(b.) The law takes notice of, and chargeth thee with its curse, as well for sinful thoughts as for vile and sinful actions. ‘The (very) thought of foolishness *is* sin,’ Pr. xxiv. 9, though it never breaks out into act, and will as surely merit the damnation of the soul as will the greatest transgression in the world.

(c.) If now thou couldst keep all the commandments, that will do thee no good at all, because thou hast sinned first: ‘The soul that sinneth shall die.’ Unless, then, thou canst endure the curse, and so in a legal way overcome it for the sins that thou hast committed, thou art gone, if thou comest *not* to God by Christ for mercy and pardon.

(d.) And never think of repentance, thereby to stop the mouth of the law; for the law calleth not for repentance, but life; nor will it accept of any, shouldst thou mourn and weep for thy sins till thou hast made a sea of blood with tears. This, I say, thou must know, or thou wilt not come to God by Christ for life. For the knowledge of this will cause that thou shalt neither slight the severity of the law, nor trust to the works thereof for life. Now, when thou doest neither of these, thou canst not but speed thee to God by Christ for life; for now thou hast no stay; pleasures are gone, all hope in thyself is gone. Thou now diest, and that is the way to live; for this inward death is, or feels like, a hunger-bitten stomach, that cannot but crave and gape for meat and drink. Now it will be as possible for thee to sleep with thy finger in the fire, as to forbear craving of mercy so long as this knowledge remains.

4. As a man must know himself, the emptiness of this world, and the law, so *it is necessary for him to know that there is a hell, and how insupportable the torments of it are*; for all threatenings, curses, and determinations to punish in the next world will prove but fictions and scarecrows, if there be no woful place, no woful state, for the sinner to receive his wages in for sin, when his days are ended in this world. Wherefore, this word 'saved' supposeth such a place and state. He is

able to save from hell, from the woful place, from the woful state of hell, them that come unto God by him.

Christ, therefore, often insinuates the truth of a hell in his invitations to the sinners of this world to come to him; as where he tells them they shall be saved if they do, they shall be damned if they do not. As if he had said, there is a hell, a terrible hell, and they that come to me I will save them from it; but they that come not, the law will damn them in it. Therefore, that thou mayest indeed come to God by Christ for mercy, believe there is a hell, a woful, terrible place. Hell is God's creature, 'he hath made it deep and large!' The punishments are by the lashes of his wrath, which will issue from his mouth like a stream of burning brimstone, ever kindling itself upon the soul. Is. xxx. 33. Thou must know this by the Word, and fly from it, or thou shalt know it by thy sins, and lie and cry in it.

I might enlarge, but if I did, I should be swallowed up; for we are while here no more able to set forth the torments of hell, than we are while here to set forth the joys of heaven; only this may, and ought to be said, that God is able, as to save, so to cast into hell. Lu. xii. 5. And as he is able to make heaven sweet, good, pleasurable, and glorious beyond thought; so he is able to make the torments of hell so exquisite, so hot, so sharp, so intolerable, *that no tongue can utter it, no, not the damned in*

hell themselves. **Is. lxi. 4.** If thou lovest thy soul, slight not the knowledge of hell, for that, with the law, are the spurs which Christ useth to prick souls forward to himself withal. What is the cause that sinners can play so delightfully with sin? It is for that they forget there is a hell for them to descend into for their so doing, when they go out of this world. For here usually he gives our stop to a sinful course; we perceive that hell hath opened her mouth before us. Lest thou shouldst forget, I beseech thee, another time, to retain the knowledge of hell in thine understanding, and apply the burning-hot thoughts thereof to thy conscience; this is one way to make thee gather up thy heels, and mend thy pace in thy coming to Jesus Christ, and to God the Father by him.*

5. It is also necessary that he that cometh to God by the Lord Jesus, should know *what death is, and the uncertainty of its approaches upon us.* Death is, as I may call it, the feller, the cutter down. Death is that that puts a stop to a further living here, and that which lays man where judgment finds him. If he is in the faith in Jesus, it lays him down there to sleep till the Lord comes; if he be not in the faith, it lays him down in his sins till the

* Nothing can be more solemn and awful than are these warnings. O that we may feel the spurs, the condemning curse of a broken law, and a sense of the jaws of hell, urging us on in coming to, and cleaving to Christ.—ED.

Lord comes. He. xl. 13. 1 Th. iv. 14. Job xx. 11. Again; if thou hast some beginnings that look like good, and death should overtake thee before those beginnings are ripe, thy fruit will wither, and thou wilt fall short of being gathered into God's barn. Some men are 'cut off as the tops of the ears of corn,' and some are even nipped by death in the very bud of their spring; but the safety is when a man is ripe, and shall be gathered to his grave, as a shock of corn to the barn in its season. Job xxiv. 20-24; v. 26.

Now if death should surprise and seize thee before thou art fit to die, all is lost; for there is no repentance in the grave, or rather, as the wise man has it, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.' Ec. ix. 10.

Death is God's sergeant, God's bailiff, and he arrests in God's name when he comes, but seldom gives warning before he clappeth us on the shoulder; and when he arrests us, though he may stay a little while, and give us leave to pant, and tumble, and toss ourselves for a while upon a bed of languishing, yet at last he will prick our bladder, and let out our life, and then our soul will be poured upon the ground, yea, into hell, if we are not ready and prepared for the life everlasting. He that doth not watch for, and is not afraid lest death should *prevent him*, will not make haste to God by Christ.

What Job said of temporal afflictions, such an one will death be if thou art not aware—‘When I looked for good, then evil came - The days of affliction prevented me.’ Job xxx. 26, 27. If thou lookest, or beginnest to look for good, and the day of death shall cut thee off before thou hast found that good thou lookest for, all is lost, soul, and life, and heaven, and all. Wherefore it is convenient that thou conclude the grave is thy house, and that thou make thy bed once a day in the grave; also that thou say unto corruption, ‘Thou *art* my father; to the worm, *thou art* my mother and my sister.’ Job xvii. 13, 14. I say, be acquainted with the grave and death. The fool puts the evil day far away, but the wise man brings it nigh. Better be ready to die seven years before death comes, than want one day, one hour, one moment, one tear, one sorrowful sigh at the remembrance of the ill-spent life that I have lived. This, then, is that which I admonish thee of; namely, that thou know death, what it is, what it doth when it comes. Also, that thou consider well of the danger that death leaves that man in, to whom he comes before he is ready and prepared to be laid by it in the grave.

6. Thou must also be made by thy awakenings to see *what Christ is*. This is of absolute necessity; for how can or shall a man be willing to come to Christ that knows not what he is, what God has appointed him to do? He is the Saviour, every

man will say so; but to sense, smell, and taste, what saving is, and so to understand the nature of the office and work of a Saviour, is a rare thing, kept close from most, known but by some. Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour or the reconciler of men to God in the body of his flesh through death. col. 1. 19-21. This is he whose business in coming from heaven to earth was to save his people from their sins. Now, as was said, to know how he doth this, is that which is needful to be inquired into; for some say he doth it one way, some, he doth it another; and it must be remembered that we are now speaking of the salvation of that man that from new or first awakenings, is coming to God by Christ for life. (1.) Some say he doth it, by giving of us precepts and laws to keep, that we might be justified thereby. (2.) Some say that he doth it, by setting himself a pattern for us to follow him. (3.) Some again hold, that he doth it by our following the light within.

But thou must take heed of all these, for he justifies us by none of these means, and thou dost need to be justified. I say, he justifieth us, not either by giving laws unto us, or by becoming our example, or by our following of him in any sense, but by his blood shed for us. His blood is not laws, nor ordinances, nor commandments, but a price, a redeeming price. Ro. v. 7-9. Re. i. 5. He justifies us *by bestowing upon us. not by expecting from us; he*

justifies us by his grace, not by our works. Ep. i. 7. In a word, thou must be well grounded in the knowledge of what Christ is, and how men are justified by him, or thou wilt not come unto God by him.

As thou must know him, and how men are justified by him, so thou must know the readiness that is in him to receive and to do for those what they need that come unto God by him. Suppose his merits were never so efficacious, yet if it could be proved that there is a loathness in him that these merits should be bestowed upon the coming ones, there would but few adventure to wait upon him. But now, as he is full, he is free. Nothing pleases him better than to give what he has away; than to bestow it upon the poor and needy. And it will be convenient that thou who art a coming soul shouldst know this for thy comfort to encourage thee to come to God by him. Take two or three sayings of his, for the confirming of what is now said. ‘Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ Mat. xi. 28. ‘All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.’ Jn. vi. 37. ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ Mar. ii. 17. ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.’ 1 Ti. i. 15.

7. As a man that would come to God by Christ

must, antecedent to his so coming, know himself, what he is; the world, how empty it is; the law, how severe it is; death, and what it is; and Christ, and what he is; *so also he must know God.* 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' He. xi. 6. God must be known, else how can the sinner propound him as his end, his ultimate end? For so doth every one that indeed doth come to Christ aright; he comes to Christ because he is the way; he comes to God because he is the end. But, I say, if he knows him not, how can he propound him as the end? The end is that for the sake of which I propound to myself anything, and for the sake of which I use any means. Now, then, I would be saved; but why? Even because I would enjoy God. I use the means to be saved; and why? Because I would enjoy God. I am sensible that sin has made me come short of the glory of God, and that Christ Jesus is he, the only he, that can put me into a condition of obtaining the glory of God; and, therefore, I come to God by him. Ro. iii. 23; v. 1, 2.

But, I say again, who will propound God for his end that knows him not, that knows him not aright? yea, that knows him not, to be worth being propounded as my end in coming to Jesus Christ; and he that thus knows him must know him to be above all, best of all, and him in whom the soul

shall find that content, that bliss, that glory and happiness that can by no means be found elsewhere. And, I say, if this be not found in God, the soul will never propound him to itself as the only, highest, and ultimate end in its coming to Jesus Christ. But it will propound something else, even what it shall imagine to be the best good; perhaps heaven, perhaps ease from guilt, perhaps to be kept out of hell, or the like. I do not say but a man may propound all these to himself, in his coming to Jesus Christ; but if he propound these as his ultimate end, as the chiefest good that he seeks; if the presence and enjoyment of God, of God's glorious majesty, be not his chief design, he is not concerned in the salvation that is propounded in our text—'He is able,' and so will 'save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.'

What is heaven without God? what is ease without the peace and enjoyment of God? what is deliverance from hell without the enjoyment of God? The propounding, therefore, these, and only these, to thyself for thy happiness in thy coming to Jesus Christ is a proposal not a hair's breadth higher than what a man without grace can propound. What or who is he that would not go to heaven? What or who is he that would not also have ease from the guilt of sin? And where is the man that chooseth to go to hell? But many there be that cannot abide God; no, they like not

to go to heaven, because God is there. If the devil had a heaven to bestow upon men, a vicious and a beastly heaven, if it be lawful thus to speak, I durst pawn my soul upon it, were it a thousand times better than it is, that, upon a bare invitation, the foul fiend would have twenty to God's one. They, I say, cannot abide God; nay, for all, the devil has nothing but a hell for them; yet how thick men go to him, but how thinly to God Almighty. The nature of God lieth cross to the lusts of men. A holy God, a glorious holy God, an infinitely holy God, this spoils all. But to the soul that is awakened, and that is made to see things as they are; to him God is what he is in himself, the blessed, the highest, the only eternal good, and he without the enjoyment of whom all things would sound but emptily in the ears of that soul.

Now, then, I advise thee that hast a mind to come to God by Christ, that thou seek the knowledge of God—'If thou seekest wisdom as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.' Pr. II. 4, 5. And to encourage thee yet further, he is so desirous of communion with men, that he pardoneth sins for that. Hence he is called not only loving, but love. 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in *love* dwelleth in *God*, and God in him.

Methinks, when I consider what glory there is at times upon the creatures, and that all their glory is the workmanship of God ; O Lord, say I, what is God himself ? He may well be called the God of glory, as well as the glorious Lord ; for as all glory is from him, so in him is an inconceivable well-spring of glory, of glory to be communicated to them that come by Christ to him. Wherefore, let the glory, and love, and bliss, and eternal happiness that is in God allure thee to come to him by Christ.

8. As thou shouldst, nay, must, have a good knowledge of all these, *so thou must have it of judgment to come.* They that come to God by Christ are said to ‘flee from the wrath to come ;’ to ‘flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them.’ Mat. iii. 7. He. vi. 18.

This judgment to come is a warm thing to be thought of, an awakening thing to be thought of ; it is called the eternal judgment, because it is and will be God’s final conclusion with men. This day is called the ‘great and notable day of the Lord,’ Ac. ii. 20 ; the day ‘that shall burn like an oven,’ Mal. iv. 1 ; the day in which the angels shall gather the wicked together, as tares, into bundles, to burn them ; but the rest, into his kingdom and glory. This day will be it in which all the bowels of love and compassion shall be shut up to the wicked, and that in which the floodgates of wrath shall be

opened, by which shall a plentiful reward be given to evil-doers, but glory to the righteous. Ps. xxxi. 23. This is the day in which men, if they could, would creep into the ground for fear; but because they cannot, therefore, they will call and cry to the mountains to fall upon them, but they shall not; therefore, they stand bound to bear their judgment.

This day will be the day of breaking up of closet-councils, cabinet-councils, secret purposes, hidden thoughts; yea, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.' Ec. xii. 14. I say he shall do it then; for he will both 'bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.' 1 Co. iv. 5. This is the day that is appointed to put them to shame and contempt in that have, in this world, been bold and audacious in their vile and beastly ways. At this day, God will cover all such bold and brazen faces with shame. Now they will blush till the blood is ready to burst through their cheeks. Da. xii. 2. Oh! the confusion and shame that will cover their faces while God is discovering to them what a nasty, what a beastly, what an uncomely, and what an unreasonable life they lived in the world. They shall now see they contemned God, that fed them, that clothed them, that gave them life and limb, and that maintained their breath in their nostrils. But, oh, when they see the gulf before *them*, and all things ready to receive them in



thither; then, then they will know what sinning against God means!

And, I say, thou that art for coming to God by Christ must know this, and be well assured of this, or thou wilt never come to God by him.

What of the glory of God shall be put upon them that do indeed come to him will also help in this spiritual journey, if it be well considered by thee. But, perhaps, terror and unbelief will suffer thee to consider but little of that. However, the things afore-mentioned will be goads, and will serve to prick thee forward; and if they do so, they will be God's great blessing unto thee, and that for which thou wilt give him thy thanks for ever. Ec. xii. 10, 11.

Thus I have, in few words, spoken something as to the first sort of comers to God by Christ, namely, of the coming of the newly-awakened man. And I say again, if any of the things afore-named be wanting, and are not with his heart, it is a question whether, notwithstanding all the noise that he may make about religion, he will ever come to God by Christ. 1. If he knows not himself and the badness of his condition, wherefore should he come? 2. If he knows not the world, and the emptiness and vanity thereof, wherefore should he come? 3. If he knows not the law, and the severity thereof, wherefore should he come? 4. If he knows not hell, and the torments thereof,

wherefore should he come? 5. If he knows not what death is, wherefore should he come? 6. And if he knows not the Father and the Son, how can he come? 7. And to know that there is a judgment to come is as necessary to his coming as most of the rest of the things propounded. Coming to God by Christ is for shelter, for safety, for advantage, and everlasting happiness. But he that knows not, that understands not the things afore-mentioned, sees not his need of taking shelter, of flying for safety, of coming for advantage to God by Christ. I know there are degrees of this knowledge, and he that has it most warm upon him, in all likelihood, will make most haste; or, as David saith, will hasten his escape 'from the windy storm and tempest;' and he that sees least is in most danger of being the loiterer, and so of losing the prize; for all that run do not obtain it; all that fight do not win it; and ALL that strive for it have it not. Ps. lv. 8. 1 Co. ix. 24-26. 2 Ti. ii. 4, 5.

[*Of the backslider's return to Christ.*]

Second, I shall now come to the second man mentioned; to wit, *the man that is turning back from his backsliding*, and speak something also about his coming again to God by Christ

There are two things remarkable in the *returning of a backslider* to God by Christ. 1. The first

is, he gives a second testimony to the truth of all things spoken of before. 2. He also gives a second testimony of the necessity of coming to God by Christ. Of the manner of his coming to God by Christ perhaps I may also speak a word or two. But,

1. The returning again of the backslider gives a second testimony to the truth of man's state being by nature miserable, of the vanity of this world, of the severity of the law, certainty of death, and terribleness of judgment to come. His first coming told them so, but his second coming tells them so with a double confirmation of the truth. It is so, saith his first coming. Oh ! it is so, saith his second. The backsliding of a Christian comes through the overmuch persuading of Satan and lust, that the man was mistaken, and that there was no such horror in the things from which he fled, nor so much good in the things to which he hasted. Turn again, fool, says the devil, turn again to thy former course ; I wonder what frenzy it was that drove thee to thy heels, and that made thee leave so much good behind thee, as other men find in the lusts of the flesh and the good of the world. As for the law, and death, and an imagination of the day of judgment, they are but mere scarecrows, set up by politic heads, to keep the ignorant in subjection. Well, says the backslider, I will go back again and see ; so, fool as he is, he

goes back, and has all things ready to entertain him; his conscience sleeps, the world smiles, flesh is sweet, carnal company compliments him, and all that can be got is presented to this backslider to accommodate him. But, behold, he doth again begin to see his own nakedness, and he perceives that the law is whetting his axe. As for the world, he perceives it is a bubble; he also smells the smell of brimstone, for God hath scattered it upon his tabernacle, and it begins to burn within him. Job xviii. 15. Oh! saith he, I am deluded; oh! I am insnared. My first sight of things was true. I see it is so again. Now he begins to be for flying again to his first refuge; O God, saith he, I am undone, I have turned from thy truth to lies! I believed them such at first, and find them such at last. Have mercy upon me, O God!

This, I say, is a testimony, a second testimony, by the same man, as to the miserable state of man, the severity of the law, the emptiness of the world, the certainty of death, and the terribleness of judgment. This man hath seen it, and seen it again.

A returning backslider is a great blessing, I mean intended to be so, to two sorts of men—1. To the elect uncalled. 2. To the elect that are called, and that at present stand their ground. The uncalled are made to hear him, and consider; *the called are made to hear him, and are afraid of*

falling. Behold, therefore, the mystery of God's wisdom, and how willing he is that spectators should be warned and made take heed. Yea, he will permit that some of his own shall fall into the fire, to convince the world that hell is hot, and to warn their brethren to take heed that they slip not with their feet. I have often said in my heart that this was the cause why God suffered so many of the believing Jews to fall; to wit, that the Gentiles might take heed. Ro. xi. 21. O, brethren! saith the backslider that is returned, did you see how I left my God? did you see how I turned again to those vanities from which some time before I fled? O! I was deluded, I was bewitched, I was deceived; for I found all things from which I fled at first still worse by far when I went to them the second time. Do not backslide. Oh! do not backslide. The *first* ground of your departing from them was good; never tempt God a second time.

2. And as he gives us a second testimony, that the world and himself are so as at first he believed they were, so by this his returning he testifies that God and Christ are the same, and much more than ever he believed at first they were. This man has made a proof before and a proof after conviction of the evil of the one and good of the other. This man has made a proof by feeling and seeing, and that before and after grace received. This man

God has set up to be a witness; this man is **two** men, has the testimony of two men, must serve in the place of two men. He knows what it is to be fetched from a state of nature by grace; but this all Christians know as well as he. Ay, but he knows what it is to be fetched from the world, from the devil, and hell, the *second time*; and that but few professors know, for few that fall away return to God again. He. vi. 4-8. Ay, but this man is come again, wherefore there is news in his mouth, sad news, dreadful news, and news that is to make the standing saint to take heed lest he fall. The returning backslider, therefore, is a rare man, a man of worth and intelligence, a man to whom the men of the world should flock, and of whom they should learn to fear the Lord God. He also is a man of whom the saints should receive both caution, counsel, and strength in their present standing; and they should, by his harms, learn to serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling. 1 Co. x. 6-13. Ps. li. 11-13. Lu. xxii. 32.

This man has the second time also had a proof of God's goodness in his Christ unto him, a proof which the standing Christian has not—I would not tempt him that stands to fall; but the good that a returning backslider has received at God's hands, and at the hand of Christ, is a double good, he has been converted twice, fetched from *the world, and from the devil, and from himself twice*;

oh, grace ! and has been made to know the stability of God's covenant, the unchangeableness of God's mind, the sure and lasting truth of his promise in Christ, and of the sufficiency of the merits of Christ, over and over.

[*The manner of a backslider's return.*].—Of the manner of this man's coming to God by Christ I shall also speak a word or two. He comes as the newly-awakened sinner comes, and that from the same motives and the knowledge of things as he hath over and above (which he had as good have been without), that which the newly-awakened sinner has not ; to wit, the guilt of his backsliding, which is a guilt of a worse complexion, of a deeper dye, and of a heavier nature than is any guilt else in the world. He is also attended with fears and doubts that arise from other reasons and considerations than do the doubts and fears of the newly-awakened man ; doubts builded upon the vileness of his backsliding. He has also more dreadful scriptures to consider of, and they will look more wishfully in his face, yea, and will also make him take notice of their grim physiognomy, than has the newly-awakened man. Besides, as a punishment of his backsliding, God seems to withdraw the sweet influences of his Spirit, and as if he would not suffer him to pray, nor to repent any more, Ps. li. 11, as if he would now take all away from him, and leave him to those lusts and idols

that he left his God to follow. Swarms of his new rogueries shall haunt him in every place, and that not only in the guilt, but in the filth and pollution of them. Pr. xiv. 14. None know the things that haunt a backslider's mind, his *new* sins are all turned talking devils, threatening devils, roaring devils, within him. Besides, he doubts of the truth of his first conversion, consequently he has it lying upon him as a strong suspicion that there was nothing of truth in all his first experience; and this also adds *lead* to his heels, and makes him come, as to sense and feeling, more heavy and with the greater difficulty to God by Christ. As faithfulness of other men kills him, he cannot see an honest, humble, holy, faithful servant of God, but he is pierced and wounded at the heart. Ay, says he within himself, that man fears God, that man hath faithfully followed God, that man, like the elect angels, has kept his place; but I am fallen from my station like a devil. That man honoureth God, edifieth the saints, convinceth the world, and condemneth them, and is become heir of the righteousness which is by faith. But I have dishonoured God, stumbled and grieved saints, made the world blaspheme, and, for aught I know, been the cause of the damnation of many! These are the things, I say, together with many more of the same kind, that come with him; yea, they *will come with him*, yea, and will stare him in the face,

will tell him of his baseness, and laugh him to scorn, all the way that he is coming to God by Christ—*I know what I say!*—and this makes his coming to God by Christ hard and difficult to him. Besides, he thinks saints will be aware of him, will be shy of him, will be afraid to trust him, yea, will tell his Father of him, and make intercession against him, as Elias did against Israel, Ro. xi. 2, or as the men did that were fellow-servants with him that took his brother by the throat. Mat. xviii. 31. Shame covereth his face all the way he comes; he doth not know what to do; the God he is returning to, is the God that he has slighted, the God before whom he has preferred the vilest lust; and he knows God knows it, and has before him all his ways. The man that has been a backslider, and is returning to God, can tell strange stories, and yet such as are very true. No man was in the whale's belly, and came out again alive, but backsliding and returning Jonah; consequently, no man could tell how he was there, what he felt there what he saw there, and what workings of heart he had when he was there, so well as he.

[*The sincere Christian's coming to God by Christ.*]

Third, I come now to the third man—to wit, to the sincere and upright man that cometh to God by Christ. And although this may, in some sense, be applicable to the two former, for his coming is not

worthy to be counted coming to God, that is, not in sincerity and uprightness, yet by such an one I now mean, one that has been called to the faith, and that has in some good measure of sincerity and uprightness therein abode with God

This man also comes to God by Christ; but his coming is to be distinguished, I mean in the main of it, from the coming of the other two. The other come for the *knowledge* of forgiveness, a thing that the upright and faithful Christian for the most part has a comfortable faith of, and that for which he is often helped to give thanks to God. I do not say he doubteth not, or that he has not his evidences sometimes clouded; nor do I say that the knowledge of his reconciliation to God by Christ Jesus is so high, so firm, so fixed, and steadfast, that it cannot be shaken, or that he needs no more. I will then explain myself. He comes not to God as an unconverted sinner comes; he comes not as a backslider comes when he is returning to God from his backslidings; but he comes as a son, as one of the household of God, and he comes as one that has not, since correction, wickedly departed from his God.

1. He then comes to God with that access and godly boldness that is only proper to such as himself, that is, to them that walk with God. Ro. v. 2. Thus every one that shall be saved doth not do; thus every one that shall be saved cannot do—to *instance* the two spoken of before.

2. He comes to God by Christ constantly by prayer, by meditation, by every ordinance. For therefore he maketh use of ordinances, because by them through Christ he getteth into the presence of God. Ps. xxvii. 4.

3. He comes to God through Christ, because he judgeth that God only is that good, that blessedness, that happiness, that is worth looking after; that good and that blessedness that alone can fill the soul to the brim; that good and that happiness that is worthy of our hearts and souls and spirits. Hence David expresseth his coming to God by panting, by thirsting, by tears, saying, 'My soul panteth after thee, O God.' And again, 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God?' Ps. xlii. 1, 2. And again, 'I will go to the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy.' Ps. xliii. 4. And hence it was that he so envied the swallow and sparrow, even because they could come to the altar of God, where he had promised to give his presence, when he, as I think, by the rage of Saul, was forced to abide remote. 'My soul longeth,' saith he, 'yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house, they will

be still praising thee.' Then after a few more words he saith, 'For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper,' I would choose rather to sit at the threshold of thy house, 'than to dwell in the tents of wickedness;' and then renders the reason—'For the Lord is a sun and shield: the Lord gives grace and glory,' &c. Ps. lxxxiv.

The presence of God, and the glory and soul-ravishing goodness of that presence, is a thing that the world understands not, nor can they *as such* desire to know what it is.

4. These good men come to God upon other accounts also; for so it is that they have many concerns with God.

[*Concern for themselves.*.]—(1.) They come to him for a more clear discovery of themselves to themselves, for they desire to know how frail they are, because the more they know that, the more they are engaged in their souls to take heed to their ways, and to fear lest they should tempt their God to leave them. Ps. xxxix. 1–8.

(2.) They come to God by Christ for the weakening of their lusts and corruptions; for they are a sore, yea, a plague to a truly sanctified soul. Those, to be rid of which, if it might be, a godly man chooseth rather to die than to live. This David did mean when he cried, 'Create in me a *clean heart*, O God, and renew a right spirit within

me,' Ps. li. 10; and Paul, when he cried out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Ro. vii. 24.

(3.) They come to God by Christ for the renewing and strengthening of their graces. The graces that the godly have received are, and they feel they are, subject to decay; yea, they cannot live without a continual supply of grace. This is the meaning of that, 'Let us have grace,' and, 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' He. iv. 16.

(4.) They come to God by Christ to be helped against those temptations that they may meet withal. Mat. vi. 13. They know that every new temptation has a new snare and a new evil in it; but what snare and what evil, that at present they know not; but they know their God knows, and can deliver out of temptation when we are in, and keep us out while we are out.

(5.) They come to God by Christ for a blessing upon that means of grace which God has afforded for the succour of the soul, and the building of it up in the faith; knowing that as the means, so a blessing upon it, is from God. 2 Th. iii. 1. And for this they have encouragement, because God has said, 'I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.' Ps. cxxxii. 15.

(6.) They come to God by Christ for the for-

givenness of daily infirmities, Ps. **xl.** 12, and for the continuing them in the light of his countenance notwithstanding. Thus he also would always accept them and their services, and grant that an answer of peace may be returned from their Father into their bosoms; for this is the life of their souls. There are a great many such things that the sincere and upright man comes to God for, too many here to mention. But again,

[*Concern for the church and others.*].—(1.) This man also comes to God to beseech him for the flourishing of Christ's kingdom, which he knows will never be until Antichrist is dead, and till the Spirit be more plentifully poured upon us from on high. Therefore he also cries to God for the downfall of the first, and for the pouring out of the other.

(2.) He comes to God for the hastening the gathering in of his elect; for it is an affliction to him to think that so many of those for whom Christ died should be still in a posture of hostility against him. Ps. **cxii.** 6.

(3.) He comes to God for a spirit of unity to be poured out among believers, for, for the divisions of Reuben he has great thoughts of heart.

(4.) He comes to God to pray for magistrates, and that God would make speed to set them all to that work that is so desirable to his church—that *is*, to 'hate the whore,' 'to eat her flesh,' to 'make her desolate,' 'and burn her with fire.' 1 Th. **ii.** 1. Re. **xvii.** 16.

(5.) He comes to God to beg that he would hasten that great and notable day, the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus, for he knows that Christ will never be exalted as he must be till then; yea, he also knows that God's church will never be as she would, and shall, till then. *Re. xxi. 20.*

(6.) But the main meaning, if I may so call it, of this high text is this, that they that come to God by him—that is, by Christ, are those that come by Christ to God to enjoy him by faith and spirit here, and by open vision and unspeakable possession of him in the next world. This is the great design of the soul in its coming to God by Jesus Christ, and it comes to him by Jesus Christ because it dares not come by itself, and because God himself has made him the way, the new and living way. Here, as I said, the Father meets with that which pleaseth him, and the soul with that which saveth her. Here is righteousness and merits to spare, even righteousness that can justify the ungodly. Here is always, how empty soever we be, a fulness of merit always presented to God by Christ for my obtaining of that which at any time I want, whether wisdom, grace, Spirit, or any good thing soever; only, since I was upon this subject, I thought a little to touch upon things in this order, for the enlarging of thy thoughts, for the conviction of thy spirit, for the stirring of thee up to God, and for the showing of thee the good

signs of grace where it is, where it is abused, and where any are seeking after it.

[Inferences from thus coming to God by Christ.]

And now I come to draw some inferences from this point also, as I have already done from those going before it. You see that I have now been speaking to you of the man that cometh to God, both with respect to the way he comes, as also with respect to the manner of spirit in which he comes; and hence I may well infer,

First, That he is no fool, no fool according to the best judgment, that cometh to God by Christ. The world indeed will count him one; for the things that be of the Spirit of God are foolishness to them; but indeed, and in the verdict of true judgment, he is not so.

1. For that he now seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom. He has chosen to be concerned with the very head and fountain of wisdom; for Christ is the wisdom of God, and the way to the Father by Christ, is the greatest of mysteries; and to choose to walk in that way, the fruits of the most sage advice; wherefore he is not a fool that thus concerns himself. Pr. xviii. 1. 1 Co. 1.

2. It is not a sign of foolishness timely to prevent ruin, is it? They are the prudent men that foresee an evil, and hide themselves; and the fools, *that go on, and are punished.* Pr. xviii. 3; xxvii. 12.

Why, this man foresees an evil, the greatest evil, sin, and the punishment of the soul for sin in hell; and flies to Christ, who is the refuge that God has provided for penitent sinners; and is this a sign of a fool? God make me such a fool, and thee that readest these lines such a fool, and then we shall be wiser than all men that are counted wise by the wisdom of this world. Is it a sign of a fool to agree with one's adversary while we are in the way with him, even before he delivereth us to the judge? Yea, it is a piece of the highest wisdom.

Is he a fool that chooseth for himself long lasters, or he whose best things will rot in a day? Sinners, 'before your pots can feel the thorns (before you can see where you are), God shall take you away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in *his* wrath.' Ps. lvi. 9. But this man has provided for things; like the tortoise, he has got a shell on his back, so strong and sound that he fears not to suffer a loaden cart to go over him. The Lord is his rock, his defence, his refuge, his high tower, unto which he doth continually resort.

Was the unjust steward a fool in providing for himself for hereafter? for providing friends to receive him to harbour when others should turn him out of their doors? Lu. xvi. 8, 9. No more is he that gets another house for his harbour before death shall turn him out of doors here.

3. As he that cometh to God by Christ

no fool, so he is no little-spirited fellow. There are a generation of men in this world that count themselves men of the largest capacities, when yet the greatness of their desires lift themselves no higher than to things below. If they can, with their net of craft and policy, encompass a bulky lump of earth, oh what a treasure have they engrossed to themselves! Meanwhile, the man in the text has laid siege to heaven, has found out the way to get into the city, and is resolved, in and by God's help, to make that his own. Earth is a drossy thing in this man's account; earthly greatness and splendours are but like vanishing bubbles in this man's esteem. None but God, as the end of his desires, none but Christ, as the means to accomplish this his end, are things counted great by this man. No company now is acceptable to this man but the Spirit of God, Christ and angels, and saints, as fellow-heirs with himself. All other men and things he deals with as strangers and pilgrims were wont to do. This man's mind soars higher than the eagle or stork of the heavens. He is for musing about things that are above, and their glory, and for thinking what shall come to pass hereafter.

4. But as I have showed you what he is not, so now let me, by a few words, tell you what he is.

(1.) Then he is a man concerned for his soul, for his immortal soul. The soul is a thing, though *of most worth*, least minded by most. The souls

of most lie waste while all other things are enclosed. But this man has got it by the end, that his soul is of more value than the world, wherefore he is concerned for his soul. Soul concerns are concerns of the highest nature, and concerns that arise from thoughts most deep and ponderous. He never yet knew what belonged to great and deep thoughts that is a stranger to soul concerns. Now the man that comes to God by Christ, is a man that is engaged in soul concerns.

(2.) He is a man whose spirit is subjected to a suitableness to spiritual things, for a carnal mind cannot suit with and be delighted in these things: 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Ro. viii. 7. This is the man that God has tamed, and keeps tame by himself, while all other run wild, as the asses upon the mountains. If birds could speak, surely they would tell that those that are kept in the cage have with them another temper than they that range the air, and fly in the fields and woods. Yea, and could those kept tame express themselves to the rest, they would tell that they have white bread and milk, and sugar; while those without make a life out of maggots and worms. They are also in place where there are better things, and their companions are the children of men; besides, they learn such notes, and can whistle such tunes, as other birds are strangers to. Oh! the

man whose spirit is subjected to God, betwixt whom and God there is a reconciliation, not only as to a difference made up, but also as to a oneness of heart; none knows what lumps of sugar God gives that man, nor what notes and tunes God learns that man: 'He hath put a new song in my mouth,' saith David, '*even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.' Ps. xl. 3.

Second. Is there a man that comes to God by Christ? Thence I infer that *there is that believes there is a world to come.* No man looks after that which yet he believes is not; faith must be before coming to Christ will be; coming is the fruit of faith. He that comes must believe antecedent to his coming; wherefore it is said, 'we walk by faith'—that is, we come to God through Christ by faith.

He. xi. 7. 2 Co. v. 7. And hence I learn two things:—

1. That faith is of a strong and forcible quality.
2. That they who come not to God by Christ have no faith.

1. Faith is of a strong and forcible quality, and that whether it be true or false.

(1.) A false faith has done great things; it has made men believe lies, plead for them, and stand to them, to the damnation of their souls. 'God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie,' to their damnation. 2Th. ii. 11, 12. Hence it is said, men make lies 'their refuge.' Why?

Because they 'trust in a lie.' *Je. xxviii. 15.* A lie, if believed, if a man has faith in it, it will do great things, because faith is of a forcible quality. Suppose thyself to be twenty miles from home, and there some man comes and possesses thee that thy house, thy wife and children, are all burned with the fire. If thou believest it, though indeed there should be nothing of truth in what thou hast heard, yet will this lie 'drink up thy spirit,' even as if the tidings were true. How many are there in the world whose heart Satan hath filled with a belief that their state and condition for another world is good? and these are made to live by lying hope that all shall be well with them, and so are kept from seeking for that which will make them happy indeed. Man is naturally apt and willing to be deceived, and therefore a groundless faith is the more taking and forcible. Fancy will help to confirm a false faith, and so will conceit and idleness of spirit. There is also in man a willingness to take things upon trust, without searching into the ground and reason of them. Nor will Satan be behind hand to prompt and encourage to thy believing of a lie, for that he knows will be a means to bring thee to that end to which he greatly desireth thou shouldst come. Wherefore let men beware, and, oh, that they would, of a false and lying faith!

(2.) But if a false faith is so forcible, what is a true? What force, I say, is there in a faith that

is begotten by truth, managed by truth, fed by truth, and preserved by the truth of God? This faith will make invisible things visible; not fantastically so, but substantially so—‘Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.’ He. xi. 1. True faith carrieth along with it an evidence of the certainty of what it believeth, and that evidence is the infallible Word of God. There is a God, a Christ, a heaven, saith the faith that is good, for the Word of God doth say so. The way to this God and this heaven is by Christ, for the Word of God doth say so. If I run not to this God by this Christ, this heaven shall never be my portion, for the Word of God doth say so. So, then, thus believing makes the man come to God by him. His thus believing, then, it is that carries him away from this world, that makes him trample upon this world, and that gives him the victory over this world. ‘For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.’ 1 Jn. v. 4–6.

2. Now if this be true, that faith, true faith, is *so forcible a thing* as to take a man from his seat

of ease, and make him to come to God by Christ as afore, then, is it not truly inferred from hence that they that come not to God by Christ have no faith. What! is man such a fool as to believe things, and yet not look after them? to believe great things, and yet not to concern himself with them? Who would knowingly go over a pearl, and yet not count it worth stooping for? Believe thou art what thou art; believe hell is what it is; believe death and judgment are coming, as they are; and believe that the Father and the Son are, as by the Holy Ghost in the Word they are described, and sit still in thy sins if thou canst. Thou canst not sit still; faith is forcible. Faith is grounded upon the voice of God in the Word, upon the teaching of God in the Word. And it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; for believing makes them heartily close in with, and embrace what by the Word is set before them, because it seeth the reality of them.

Shall God speak to man's soul, and shall not man believe? Shall man believe what God says, and nothing at all regard it? It cannot be. 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' And we know that when faith is come, it purifies the heart of what is opposite to God, and the salvation of the soul.

So, then, those men that are at ease in a sinful course, or that come not to God by Christ, they are

such as have no faith, and must therefore perish with the vile and unbelievers. Re. xxi. 8.

The whole world is divided into two sorts of men—believers and unbelievers. The godly are called believers; and why believers, but because they are they that have given credit to the great things of the gospel of God? These believers are here in the text called also comers, or they that come to God by Christ, because whoso believes will come; for coming is a fruit of faith in the habit, or, if you will, it is faith in exercise; yet faith must have a being in the soul before the soul can put it into act.

This therefore further evidences that they that come not, have no faith, are not believers, belong not to the household of faith, and must perish—

For he that believes not, shall be damned.*

Nor will it be to any boot* to say, I believe there is a God and a Christ, for still thy sitting still doth demonstrate that either thou liest in what thou sayest, or that thou believest with a worse than a false faith. But the object of my faith is true. I answer, so is the object of the faith of devils; for they believe that there is one God and one Christ, yet their faith, as to the root and exercise of it, is notwithstanding no such faith as is that faith that

* 'To any boot,' to any profit.

'What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe?'

Milton's Samson Agonistes.—Ed.

saves, or that is intended in the text, and that by which men come to God through Christ. Wherefore still, oh, thou slothful one, thou deceivest thyself! Thy not coming to God by Christ declareth to thy face that thy faith is not good, consequently, that thou feedest on ashes, and thy deceived heart has turned thee aside, that thou canst not deliver thy soul, nor say, '*Is there* not a lie in my right hand?' Is. xlv. 20.

Third. Is there a man that comes to God by Christ? Thence I infer that *the world to come is better than this*; yea, so much better as to quit cost and bear charges of coming to God, from this, by Christ, to that. Though there is a world to come, yet if it were no better than this, one had as good stay here as seek that, or if it were better than this, and would bear charges if a man left this for that, and that was all, still the one would be as good as the other. But the man that comes to God by Christ, has chosen the world that is infinitely good; a world, betwixt which and this there can be no comparison. This must be granted, because he that comes to God by Christ is said to have made the best choice, even chose a city that has foundations. He. xi. 10. There are several things that make it manifest enough that he that comes to God by Christ has made the best market, or chose the best world.

1. That is the world which God commendeth,

but this that that he slighteth and contemneth. 2 Th. i. 5, 6. Hence that is called the kingdom of God, but this an 'evil world.' Ga. i. 4. Now let us conclude, that since God made both, he is able to judge which of the two are best; yea, best able so to judge thereof. I choose the rather to refer you to the judgment of God in this matter, for should I put you upon asking of him as to this, that is, coming to God by Christ, perhaps you would say, he is as little able to give an account of this matter as yourselves. But I hope you think God knows, and therefore I refer you to the judgment of God, which you have in the Scriptures of truth—'Heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool.' I hope you will say here is some difference. The Lord is the God of that, the devil the god and prince of this. Thus also it appears there is some difference between them.

2. That world, and those that are counted worthy of it, shall all be everlasting; but so shall not this, nor the inhabitants of it. The earth with the works thereof shall be burned up, and the men that are of it shall die in like manner. 2 Pe. iii. 'But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.' Is. xlv. 17. This world, with the lovers of it, will end in a burning hell; but the world to come fadeth not away. 1 Pe.

3. The world that we are now in, has its best comforts mixed either with crosses or curses; but that to come with neither. There shall be no more curse: and as for crosses, all tears shall be wiped from the eyes of them that dwell there. There will be nothing but ravishing pleasures, and holy; there will be no cessation of joys, nor any speck of pollution. 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.'

Ps. xvi. 11.

4. There men shall be made like angels, 'neither can they die any more.' LU. xx. 35, 36. There shall they behold the face of God and his Son, and swim in the enjoyment of them for ever.

5. There men shall see themselves beyond all misery, and shall know that it will be utterly impossible that either anything like sorrow, or grief, or sickness, or discontent, should touch them more.

6. There men shall be rewarded of God for what they have done and suffered according to his will for his sake; there they shall eat and drink their comforts, and wear them to their everlasting consolation.

7. They are all kings that go to that world, and so shall be proclaimed there. They shall also be crowned with crowns, and they shall wear crowns of life and glory, crowns of everlasting joy, crowns of lovingkindness; yea, 'In that day the Lord of hosts himself shall be for a crown of glory to those

that are his people. He. II. 7. Is. xxviii. 5; xxxv. 10. Ps. ciii. 4. Now, if this world, though no more could be said for it than is said in these few lines, is not infinitely far better than what the present world is, I have missed it in my thoughts. But the coming man, the man that comes to God by Christ, is satisfied, knows what he does; and if his way, all his way thither, were strowed with burning coals, he would choose, God helping him, to tread that path rather than to have his portion with them that perish.

Fourth, If there be a world to come, and such a way to it so safe and good, and if God is there to be enjoyed by them that come to him by Christ; *then this shows the great madness of the most of men*, madness, I say, of the highest degree, for that they come not to God by Christ that they may be inheritors of the world to come. It is a right character which Solomon gives of them, 'The heart,' saith he, 'of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.' Ec. ix. 3. A madman is intent upon his toys, upon anything but that about which he should be intent; and so are they that come not to God by Jesus Christ. A madman has neither ears to hear, nor a heart to do, what they that are in their right wits advise him for the best, no more have they that come not *to God by Christ*. A madman sets more by the

straws and cock's feathers by which he decks himself, than he does by all the pearls and jewels in the world. And they that come not to God by Christ set more by the vanishing bubbles of this life than they do by that glory that the wise man shall inherit; 'The wise shall inherit glory, but shame,' says Solomon, 'shall be the promotion of fools.' What a shame it is to see God's jewels lie unregarded of them that yet think none are wiser than themselves.

I know the wise men of this world will scorn one should think of them that they are mad; but verily it is so, the more wise for this world, the more fool in God's matters; and the more obstinately they stand in their way, the more mad. When Solomon gave himself to backsliding, he saith he gave himself to folly and madness. Ec. i. 17; ii. 12. And when he went about to search out what man is since the fall, he went about to search out foolishness and madness. Ec. vii. 25-29. And is it not said, that when the Jews were angry with Jesus for that he did good on the Sabbath, that that anger did flow from their being filled with madness? Doth not Paul also, while he opposed himself against Christ, the gospel, and professors thereof, plainly tell us that he did it even from the highest pitch of madness? 'And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.' Ac. xxi. 11. Now if it is exceeding

madness to do thus, how many at this day must be counted exceeding mad, who yet count themselves the only sober men? They oppose themselves, they stand in their own light, they are against their own happiness, they cherish and nourish cockatrices in their own bosoms; they choose to themselves those paths which have written upon them in large characters, These are the ways of death and damnation. They are offended with them that endeavour to pull them out of their ditch, and choose rather to lie and die there than to go to God by Christ that they may be saved from wrath through him; yea, so mad are they, that they count the most sober, the most godly, the most holy man, the mad one; the more earnest for life, the more mad; the more in the Spirit, the more mad; the more desirous to promote the salvation of others, the more mad. But is not this a sign of madness, of madness unto perfection? And yet thus mad are many, and mad are all they that while it is called to-day, while their door is open, and while the golden sceptre of the golden grace of the blessed God is held forth, stand in their own light, and come not to God by Christ. Jn. x. 20. Ac. xxvi. 24. That is the fourth inference.

Fifth. A fifth inference that I gather from this text is, that *the end that God will make with men will be according as they come or come not to God*

by Christ. They that come to God by Christ have taken shelter and have hid themselves; but they that come not to God by Christ lay themselves open to the windy storm and tempest that will be in that day. And the wind then will be high, and the tempest strong, that will blow upon them that shall be found in themselves; 'Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.' Ps. l. 8, 4. And now, what will be found in that day to be the portion of them that in this day do not come to God by Christ? None knows but God, with whom the reward of unbelievers is.

But writing and preaching is in vain as to such; let men say what they will, what they can, to persuade to come, to dissuade from neglecting to come, they are resolved not to stir. They will try if God will be so faithful to himself and to his Word, as to dare to condemn them to hell fire that have refused to hear and comply with the voice of him that speaketh from heaven.

But this is but a desperate venture. Several things declare that He is determined to be at a point in this matter—

1. The gallows are built—hell is prepared for the wicked. 2. There are those already in chains,

and stand bound over to the judgment of that day, that are, as to creation, higher and greater than men, to wit, the angels that sinned. 2 Pe. ii. 4. Let sinners, then, look to themselves. 3. The Judge is prepared and appointed, and it hath fallen out to be HE that thou hast refused to come to God by; and that predicts no good to thee; for then will he say of all such, 'Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.'

Lu. xix. 27.

But what a surprise will it be to them that now have come to God by Christ to see themselves in heaven indeed, saved indeed, and possessed of everlasting life indeed. For alas! what is faith to possession? Faith that is mixed with many fears, that is opposed with many assaults, and that seems sometimes to be quite extinguished; I say, what is that to a seeing of myself in heaven? Hence it is said, that he shall then come to be admired in them that now believe, because they did here believe the testimony; then they shall admire that it was their lot to believe when they were in the world. 2 Th. i. 10. They shall also admire to think, to see, and behold, what believing has brought them to, while the rest, for refusing to come to God by Christ, drink their tears mixed with burning brimstone.

Repentance will not be found in heaven among

them that come to God by Christ ; no, hell is the place of untimely repentance ; it is there where the tears will be mixed with gnashing of teeth, while they consider how mad, and worse, they were in not coming to God by Jesus Christ.

Then will their hearts and mouths be full of, ‘ Lord, Lord, open unto us.’ But the answer will be, Ye shut me out of doors ; ‘ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ;’ besides, you refused to come to my Father by me, wherefore now you must go from my Father by me. *Mat. xxv.*

They that will not be saved by Christ, must be damned by Christ ; no man can escape one of the two. Refuse the first they may, but shun the second they cannot. And now they that would not come unto God by Christ will have leisure and time enough, if I may call it time, to consider what they have done in refusing to come to God by Christ. Now they will meditate warmly on this thing, now their thoughts will be burning hot about it, and it is too late, will be, in each thought, such a sting, that, like a bow of steel, it will continually strike him through.

Now they will bless those whom formerly they have despised, and commend those they once condemned. Now would the rich man willingly change places with poor Lazarus, though he preferred his own condition before his in the world. The day of judgment will bring the worst to rights in their

opinions; they will not be capable of misapprehending any more. They will never after that day put bitter for sweet, or darkness for light, or evil for good any more. Their madness will now be gone. Hell will be the unbeliever's bedlam house, and there God will tame them as to all those bedlam tricks and pranks which they played in this world, but not at all to their profit nor advantage; the gulf that God has placed and fixed betwixt heaven and hell will spoil all as to that.

Lu. xvi. 23—26.

But what a joy will it be to the truly godly to think now that they are come to God by Christ! It was their mercy to begin to come, it was their happiness that they continued coming; but it is their glory that they are come, that they are come to God by Christ. To God! why, he is all! all that is good, essentially good, and eternally good. To God! the infinite ocean of good. To God, in friendly-wise, by the means of reconciliation; for the other now will be come to him to receive his anger, because they come not to him by Jesus Christ. Oh! that I could imagine; oh! that I could think, that I might write more effectually to thee of the happy estate of them that come to God by Christ.

But thus have I passed through the three former things, namely, 1. That of the intercession of *Christ*. 2. That of the benefit of intercession.

3. That of the persons that are interested in this intercession. Wherefore now I come to the

[IV. EVERY SINCERE COMER CERTAIN OF SALVATION.]

FOURTH and last head, and that is, TO SHOW YOU THE CERTAINTY OF THEIR REAPING THE BENEFIT OF HIS INTERCESSION. 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

[Christ ever living is the safety of comers.]

The certainty of their reaping the benefit of being saved that come unto God by Christ is thus expressed: 'Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' The intercession of Christ, and the lastingness of it, is a sure token of the salvation of them that come unto God by him.

Of his intercession, what it is, and for whom, we have spoken already; of the success and prevalency of it, we have also spoken before; but the reason of its successfulness of that we are to speak now. And that reason, as the apostle suggesteth, lies in the continuance of it, 'Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession.' The apostle also makes very much of the continuation of the priesthood of Christ in other places of this epistle: he abides a priest continually, 'Thou art a priest for

ever.' He 'hath an unchangeable priesthood.' He. vii. 3, 17, 21, 24. And here he 'ever liveth to make intercession.'

Now, by the text is showed the reason why he so continually harpeth upon the durableness of it, namely, for that by the unchangeableness of this priesthood we are saved; nay, saved demonstratively, apparently; it is evident we are. 'He is also able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' For,

First, The durableness of his intercession proves that the covenant in which those who come to God by him are concerned and wrapt up is not shaken, broken, or made invalid by all their weaknesses and infirmities.

Christ is a priest according to covenant, and in all his acts of mediation he has regard to that covenant; so long as that covenant abides in its strength, so long Christ's intercession is of worth. Hence, when God cast the old high priest out of doors, he renders this reason for his so doing: 'Because they continued not in my covenant;' that is, neither priests nor people. Therefore were they cast out of the priesthood, and the people pulled down as to a church state. He. vii. 6-9. Now, the covenant by which Christ acteth, as a priest, so far as we are concerned therein, he also himself *acteth* our part, being, indeed, the Head and Medi-

ator of the body; wherefore, God doth not count that the covenant is broken, though we sin, if Christ Jesus our Lord is found to do by it what by law is required of us. Therefore he saith, 'If his children break my law, and keep not my commandments, I will visit their sins with a rod,' &c. But their sins shall not shake my covenant with my Beloved, nor cause that I for ever should reject them. 'My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. His seed will I make to endure for ever, his seed shall endure for ever.' Ps. lxxxix. 30—36. Hence, it is clear that the covenant stands good to us as long as Christ stands good to God, or before his face; for he is not only our Mediator by covenant, but he himself is our conditions to God-ward; therefore he is said to be 'a covenant of the people,' or that which the holy God, by law, required of us. Is. xlii. 6. Hence, again, he is said to be our justice or righteousness; to wit, which answereth to what is required of us by the law. He is made unto us of God so, and in our room and in our stead presenteth himself to God. So, then, if any ask me by what Christ's priesthood is continued, I answer, by covenant; for that the covenant by which he is made priest abideth of full force. If any ask whether the church is concerned in that covenant, I answer, yes; yet so as that all points and parts thereof, that concern life and death everlasting, is

laid upon his shoulders, and he alone is the doer of it. He is the Lord our righteousness, and he is the Saviour of the body, so that *my sins* break not the covenant; but *them** notwithstanding, God's covenant stands fast with him, with him for evermore. And good reason, if no fault can be found with Christ, who is the person that did strike hands with his Father upon our account and for us; to wit, to do what was meet should be found upon us when we came to appear before God by him.

And that God himself doth so understand this matter is evident; because he also, by his own act, giveth and imputeth to us that good that we never did, that righteousness which we never wrought out; yea, and for the sake of that transmitteth our sins unto Christ, as to one that had not only well satisfied for them, but could carry them so far, both from us and from God, that they should never again come to be charged on the committers, to death and damnation. Ro. iv. 1-5. The Scriptures are so plentiful for this, that he must be a Turk, or a Jew, or an atheist that denies it. Besides, God's commanding that men should believe in his Son unto righteousness well enough proveth this thing, and the reason of this command doth prove

* 'Them.' As Christ is the Saviour of both body and soul, notwithstanding the sins of the body, they break not the covenant; because it is God's covenant, and stands fast in *Christ for evermore*.—Ed.

it with an over and above; to wit, 'For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 2 Co. v. 19-21. Hence comes out that proclamation from God, at the rising again of Christ from the dead: 'Be it known unto you, therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' Ac. xiii. 38, 39.

If this be so, as indeed it is, then here lieth a great deal of this conclusion, 'he ever liveth to make intercession,' and of the demonstration of the certain salvation of him that cometh to God by him, 'seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' For if Christ Jesus is a priest by covenant, and so abides as the covenant abides, and if, since the covenant is everlasting, his priesthood is unchangeable, then the man that cometh to God by him must needs be certainly saved; for if the covenant, the covenant of salvation, is not broken, none can show a reason why he that comes to Christ should be damned, or why the priesthood of Jesus Christ should cease. Hence, after the apostle had spoken of the excellency of his person and priesthood, he then shows that the benefit of the covenant of God remaineth with us, namely, that grace should be communicated unto us *for his*

priesthood's sake, and that our sins and iniquities God would remember no more. He. viii. 10-12; x. 16-22. Now, as I also have already hinted, if this covenant, of which the Lord Jesus is Mediator and High Priest, has in the bowels of it, not only grace and remission of sins, but a promise that we shall be partakers thereof, through the blood of his priesthood, for so it comes to us; then, why should not we have boldness, not only to come to God by him, but to enter also 'into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way,' &c.

Second, But, further, this priesthood, as to the unchangeableness of it, is confirmed unto him 'with an oath, by him that said unto him, the Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever.' This oath seems to me to be for the confirmation of the covenant, as it is worded before by Paul to the Galatians, Ga. iii. 15-17, when he speaks of it with respect to that establishment that it also had on Christ's part by the sacrifice which he offered to God for us; yea, he then speaks of the mutual confirmation of it both by the Father and the Son. Now, I say, since, by this covenant he stands and abides a Priest, and since 'the Lord sware, and will not repent, saying, Thou *art* a priest for ever,' we are still further confirmed in the certain salvation of him that cometh to God by Christ.

The Lord, by swearing, confirmeth to Christ,

and so to us in him, the immutability of his counsel, He. vi. 16-18, and that he is utterly unchangeable in his resolutions 'to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Christ.' And this also shows that this covenant, and so the promise of remission of sins, is steadfast and unmovable. And it is worth your noting the manner and nature of this oath, 'The Lord sware, and will not repent.' It is as much as to say, What I have now sworn I bind me for ever to stand to, or, I determine never to revoke; and that is, 'That thou art a priest for ever.' Now, as was said before, since his priesthood stands by covenant, and this covenant of his priesthood is confirmed by this oath, it cannot be but that he that comes by him to God must be accepted of him; for should such a one be rejected, it must be either for the greatness of his sins, or for want of merit in the sacrifice he presented and urged, as to the merit of it, before the mercy-seat. But let the reason specified be what it will, the consequence falls harder upon the sacrifice of Christ than it can do anywhere else, and so also upon the covenant, and at last upon God himself, who has sworn, and will not repent, that he is a Priest for ever. I thus discourse, to show you what dangerous conclusions follow from a conceit that some that come to God by Christ shall not be saved, though 'he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' And this I have further to

say, that the Lord's swearing, since the manner of the oath is such as it is, and that it also tended to establish to Christ his priesthood to be unchangeable, it declareth that, as to the excellency of his sacrifice, he is eternally satisfied in the goodness and merit of it; and that he will never deny him anything that he shall ask for at his hands for his sufferings' sake. For this oath doth not only show God's firm resolution to keep his part of the covenant, in giving to Christ that which was covenanted for by him, but it declareth that, in the judgment of God, Christ's blood is able to save any sinner, and that he will never put stop nor check to his intercession, how great soever the sinners be that at any time he shall intercede for; so that the demonstration is clearer and clearer, 'He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

Third, This unchangeableness of the priesthood of Christ dependeth also upon his own life: 'This *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.' He. vii. 24. Now although, perhaps, at first much may not appear in this text, yet the words that we are upon take their ground from them. 'This *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood: wherefore he is able also'—that is, by his unchangeable *priesthood*—'to save them to the uttermost that

come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

The life of Christ, then, is a ground of the lastingness of his priesthood, and so a ground of the salvation of them that come unto God by him: 'We shall be saved by his life.' Ro. v. 10. Wherefore, in another place, this his life is spoken of with great emphasis—the power of an endless life. 'He is made (a priest), not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.' He. vii. 16. An endless life is, then, a powerful thing; and indeed two things are very considerable in it—1. That it is above death, and so above him that hath the power of death, the devil. 2. In that it capacitates him to be the last in his own cause, and so to have the casting voice.

1. We will speak to the first, and for the better setting of it forth we will show what life it is of which the apostle here speaks; and then how, as to life, it comes to be so advantageous, both with respect to his office of priesthood and us.

What life is it that is thus the ground of his priesthood? It is a life taken, his own life rescued from the power of the grave; a life that we had forfeited, he being our surety; and a life that he recovered again, he being the Captain of our salvation: I lay down my life that I may take it again: 'this commandment have I received of my

Father.' Jn. x. 18. It is a life, then, that was once laid down as the price of man's redemption, and a life won, gained, taken, or recovered again, as the token or true effect of the completing, by so dying, that redemption; wherefore it is said again, 'In that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' Ro. vi. 10. He liveth as having pleased God by dying for our sins, as having merited his life by dying for our sins. Now if this life of his is a life merited and won by virtue of the death that he died, as Ac. ii. 24 doth clearly manifest; and if this life is the ground of the unchangeableness of this part of his priesthood, as we see it is, then it follows that this second part of his priesthood, which is called here intercession, is grounded upon the demonstrations of the virtue of his sacrifice, which is his life taken to live again; so, then, he holds this part of his priesthood, not by virtue of a carnal commandment, but by the power of an endless life; but by the power of a life rescued from death, and eternally exalted above all that any ways would yet assault it; for 'Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.' Ro. vi. 9. Hence Christ brings in his life, the life that he won to himself by his death, to comfort John withal when he fainted under the view of that overcoming glory that he saw upon Christ in his vision of him at Patmos: 'And he laid his right

hand upon me,' said he, 'saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen.' Re. i. 17, 18. Why should Christ bring in his life to comfort John, if it was not a life advantageous to him? But the advantageousness of it doth lie not merely in the being of life, but in that it was a life laid down for his sins, and a life taken up again for his justification; a life lost to ransom him, and a life won to save him; as also the text affirmeth, saying, 'He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

Again; it is yet more manifest that Christ receiving of his life again was the death and destruction of the enemy of his people; and to manifest that it was so, therefore he adds (after he had said, 'And, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen'), 'And I have the keys of hell and of death.' I have the power over them; I have them under me; I tread them down by being a victor, a conqueror, and one that has got the dominion of life (for he now is the Prince of life), one that lives for evermore. Amen. Hence it is said again, He 'hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' 2 Ti. i. 10. He hath abolished death by his death (by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil).

and brought life (a very emphatical expression); and brought it from whence? From God, who raised him from the dead; and brought it to light, to our view and sight, by the word of the truth of the gospel.

So, then, the life that he now hath is a life once laid down as the price of our redemption; a life obtained and taken to him again as the effect of the merit that was in the laying down thereof; a life by the virtue of which death, and sin, and the curse is overcome; and so a life that is above them for ever. This is the life that he liveth—to wit, this meriting, purchasing, victorious life—and that he improveth while he ever so lives to make intercession for us.

This life, then, is a continual plea and argument with God for them that come to him by Christ, should he make no other intercession, but only show to God that he liveth; because his thus living saith, that he has satisfied for the sins of them that come unto God by him. It testifies, moreover, that those—to wit, death, the grave, and hell—are overcome by him for them; because indeed he liveth, and hath their keys. But now, add to life, to a life meritorious, intercession, or an urging of this meritorious life by way of prayer for his, and against all those that seek to destroy them, since they themselves also have been already overcome by his death, and what an encouraging con-

sideration is here for all them that come to God by him, to hope for life eternal. But,

2. Let us speak a word to the second head—namely, for that his living for ever capacitates him to be the last in his own cause, and to have the casting voice, and that is an advantage next to what is chiefest.

His cause; what is his cause? but that the death that he died when he was in the world was and is of merit sufficient to secure all those from hell, or, as the text has it, to save them that come unto God by him, to save them to the uttermost. Now, if this cause be faulty, why doth he live? yea, he liveth by the power of God, by the power of God towards us; or with a respect to our welfare, for he liveth to make intercession, intercession against Satan our accuser, for us. 2 Co. xiii. 4. Besides, he liveth before God, and to God, and that after he had given his life a ransom for us. What can follow more clearly from this, but that amends were made by him for those souls for whose sins he suffered upon the tree? Wherefore, since his Father has given him his life and favour, and that after he died for our sins, it cannot be thought but that the life he now liveth, is a life that he received as the effect of the merit of his passion for us.

God is just, and yet Christ liveth, and yet Christ liveth in heaven! God is just, and yet Christ our

passover liveth there, do what our foes can to the contrary!

And this note, by the way, that though the design of Satan against us, in his labouring continually to accuse us to God, and to prevail against our salvation, seems to terminate here, yet indeed it is also laid against the very life of Christ, and that his priesthood might be utterly overthrown; and, in conclusion, that God also might be found unjust in receiving of such whose sins have not been satisfied for, and so whose souls are yet under the power of the devil. For he that objects against him for whom Christ intercedes, objects against Christ and his merits; and he that objects against Christ's intercession, objects against God, who has made him a priest for ever. Behold you, therefore, how the cause of God, of Christ, and of the souls that come to God by him are interwoven; they are all wrapt up in one bottom. Mischief one, and you mischief all; overthrow that soul, and you overthrow his intercessor; and overthrow him, and you overthrow even him that made him a priest for ever. For the text is without restriction: 'He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.' He saith not, now and then one, or sinners of an inferior rank in sin, but them that come to God by him, how great soever their transgressions are, as is clear in that *it addeth this clause, 'to the uttermost.'* 'He is

able to save them to the uttermost.' But if he were not, why did the King send, yea, come and loose him, and let him go free; yea, admit him into his presence; yea, make him Lord over all his people, and deliver all things into his hand?

But he liveth, he ever liveth, and is admitted to make intercession, yea, is ordained of God so to do; therefore he is 'able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.' This, therefore, that he liveth, seeing he liveth to God and his judgment, and in justice is made so to do, it is chiefly with reference to his life as Mediator for their sakes for whom he makes intercession. He liveth to make intercession. And in that it is said he liveth ever, what is it but that he must live, and outlive all his enemies; for he must live, yea, reign, till all his enemies are put under his feet. 1 Co. xv. 25. Yea, his very intercessions must live till they are all dead and gone. For the devil and sin must not live for ever, not for ever to accuse. Time is coming when due course of law will have an end, and all cavillers will be cast over the bar. But then and after that, Christ our high priest shall live, and so shall his intercessions; yea, and also all them for whom he makes intercession, seeing they come unto God by him.

Now if he lives, and outlives all, and if his intercession has the casting voice, since also he pleadeth in his prayers a sufficient merit before a

just God, against a lying, malicious, clamorous, and envious adversary, he must needs carry the cause, the cause for himself and his people, to the glory of God and their salvation. So, then, his life and intercession must prevail, there can be no withstanding of it. Is not this, then, a demonstration clear as the sun, that they that come to God by him shall be saved, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them ?

Fourth, The duration of Christ's intercession, as it is grounded upon a covenant betwixt God and him, upon an oath also, and upon his life, so it is grounded upon the validity of his merits. This has been promiscuously touched before, but since it is an essential to the lastingness of his intercession, it will be to the purpose to lay it down by itself.

Intercession, then, I mean Christ's intercession, is, that those for whom he died with full intention to save them, might be brought into that inheritance which he hath purchased for them. Now, then, his intercession must, as to length and breadth, reach no further than his merits, for he may not pray for those for whom he died not. Indeed, if we take in the utmost extent of his death, then we must beware, for his death is sufficient to save the whole world. But his intercessions are kept within a narrower compass. The altar of burnt-offerings was a great deal bigger *than the altar of incense*, which was a figure of

Christ's intercession. Ex. xxvii. 1; xxx. 1. Re. viii. 3. But this, I say, his intercession is for those for whom he died with full intention to save them; wherefore it must be grounded upon the validity of his sufferings. And, indeed, his intercession is nothing else, that I know of, but a presenting of what he did in the world for us unto God, and pressing the value of it for our salvation. The blood of sprinkling is that which speaketh meritoriously, He. xii. 24; it is by the value of that that God measureth out and giveth unto us grace and life eternal; wherefore Christ's intercessions also must be ordered and governed by merit: 'By his own blood he entered into the holy place, having (before by it) obtained eternal redemption for us,' for our souls. He. ix. 12.

Now, if by blood he entered in thither, by blood he must also make intercession there. His blood made way for his entrance thither, his blood must make way for our entrance thither. Though here, again, we must beware; for his blood did make way for him as Priest to intercede; his blood makes way for us, as for those redeemed by it, that we might be saved. This, then, shows sufficiently the worth of the blood of Christ, even his ever living to make intercession for us; for the merit of his blood lasts all the while that he doth, and for all them for whom he ever liveth to make intercession. Oh, precious blood! oh, lasting merit!

Blood must be pleaded in Christ's intercession, because of justice, and to stop the mouth of the enemy, and also to encourage us to come to God by him. Justice, since that is of the essence of God, must concur in the salvation of the sinner; but how can that be, since it is said at first, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' unless a plenary* satisfaction be made for sin to the pleasing of the mighty God. The enemy also would else never let go his objecting against our salvation. But now God has declared that our salvation is grounded on justice, because merited by blood. And though God needed not to have given his Son to die for us that he might save us, and stop the mouth of the devil in so doing, yet this way of salvation has done both, and so it is declared, we are 'justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past - to declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' Ro. iii. 24, 25. So, then, here is also a ground of intercession, even the blood shed for us before.

And that you may see it yet more for your com-

* 'Plenary;' full, perfect, or complete.—ED.

fort, God did, at Christ's resurrection, to show what a price he set upon his blood, bid him ask of him the heathen, and he would give him the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. *Ps. ll. 8.* His blood, then, has value enough in it to ground intercession upon; yea, there is more worth in it than Christ will plead or improve for men by way of intercession. I do not at all doubt but that there is virtue enough in the blood of Christ, would God Almighty so apply it, to save the souls of the whole world. But it is the blood of Christ, his own blood; and he may do what he will with his own. It is also the blood of God, and he also may restrain its merits, or apply it as he sees good. But the coming soul, he shall find and feel the virtue thereof, even the soul that comes to God by Christ; for he is the man concerned in its worth, and he ever liveth to make intercession for him. Now, seeing the intercession of Christ is grounded upon a covenant, an oath, a life, and also upon the validity of his merits, it must of necessity be prevalent, and so drive down all opposition before it. This, therefore, is the last part of the text, and that which demonstrateth that he that comes to God by Christ shall be saved, seeing 'he ever liveth to make intercession for him.'

I have now done what I intend upon this subject when I have drawn a few inferences from this also.

[*Inferences from the certainty of benefit from Christ's Intercession.*]

First, then, hence I infer that *the souls saved by Christ are in themselves in a most deplorable condition.* Oh, what ado, as I may say, is here before one sinner can be eternally saved ! Christ must die ; but that is not all ; the Spirit of grace must be given to us ; but that is not all ;—but Christ must also ever live to make intercession for us. And as he doth this for all, so he doth it for each one. He interceded for me, before I was born, that I might in time, at the set time, come into being. After that, he also made intercession for me, that I might be kept from hell in the time of my unregenerate state, until the time of my call and conversion. Yet again, he then intercedes that the work now begun in my soul may be perfected, not only to the day of my dissolution, but unto the day of Christ ; that is, until he comes to judgment. Ph. i. c. So that, as he began to save me before I had being, so he will go on to save me when I am dead and gone, and will never leave off to save me until he has set me before his face for ever.

But, I say, what a deplorable condition has our sin put us into, that there must be all this ado to *save us.* Oh, how hardly is sin got out of the soul *when once it is in !* Blood takes away the guilt ; *inherent* grace weakens the filth ; but the *grave* is

the place, at the mouth of which, sin, as to the being of sin, and the saved, must have a perfect and final parting. Is. xxxviii. 10. Not that the grave of itself is of a sin-purging quality, but God will follow Satan home to his own door; for the grave is the door or gate of hell, and will there, where the devil thought to have swallowed us up, even there by the power of his mercy make us, at our coming thence, shine like the sun, and look like angels. Christ, all this while, ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Second, Hence, also, I infer that *as Satan thought he struck home at first, when he polluted our nature, and brought our souls to death, so he is marvellous loath to lose us, and to suffer his lawful captives now to escape his hands.* He is full of fire against us, full of the fire of malice, as is manifest—

1. Not only by his first attempt upon our first parents, but behold, when the Deliverer came into the world, how he roared. He sought his death while he was an infant; he hated him in his cradle; he persecuted him while he was but a bud and blossom. Mat. ii. When he was come to riper years, and began to manifest his glory, yet, lest the world should be taken with him, how politicly did this old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, work? He possessed people that he had a devil, and was mad, and a deceiver; that he wrought his miracles by magic art and by the devil; that the

prophets spake nothing of him, and that he sought to overthrow the government which was God's ordinance. And, not being contented with all this, he pursued him to the death, and could never rest until he had spilt his blood upon the ground like water. Yea, so insatiable was his malice, that he set the soldiers to forge lies about him to the denial of his resurrection, and so managed that matter that what they said has become a stumblingblock to the Jews to this very day. *Jn. x. 20; vii. 12. Mat. ix.*

34. Jn. vii. 52. Lu. xxiii. 2. Mat. xxviii. 11-15.

2. When he was ascended to God, and so was out of his reach, yet how busily went he about to make war with his people. *Re. xii.* Yea, what horrors and terrors, what troubles and temptations, has God's church met with from that day till now! Nor is he content with persecutions and general troubles; but oh! how doth he haunt the spirits of the Christians with blasphemies and troubles, with darkness and frightful fears; sometimes to their distraction, and often to the filling the church with outcries.

3. Yet his malice is in the pursuit, and now his boldness will try what it can do with God, either to tempt him to reject his Son's mediation, or to reject them that come to God by him for mercy. *And this is one cause among many why 'he ever liveth to make intercession for them that come to God by him.'*

4. And if he cannot overthrow, if he knows he cannot overthrow them, yet he cannot forbear but vex and perplex them, even as he did their Lord, from the day of their conversion to the day of their ascension to glory.

Third, Hence I infer that *the love of Christ to his, is an unceasing love, and it must needs be so; an undaunted love, and it must needs be so.* Who but Jesus Christ would have undertaken such a task as the salvation of the sinner is, if Jesus Christ had passed us by? It is true which is written of him, 'He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth,' &c. If he had not set his 'face like a flint,' the greatness of this work would surely have daunted his mind. *Is. xlii. 4; 1. 6, 7.*

For do but consider what sin is from which they must be saved; do but consider what the devil and the curse is from which they must be saved; and it will easily be concluded by you that it is he that full rightly deserveth to have his name called Wonderful, and his love such as verily passeth knowledge.

Consider, again, by what means these souls are saved, even with the loss of his life, and, together with it, the loss of the light of his Father's face. I pass by here and forbear to speak of the *matchless contradiction* of sinners which he endured *against himself*, which could not but be a great

grief, or, as himself doth word it, a breaking of heart unto him; but all this did not, could not, hinder.

Join to all this, his everlasting intercession for us, and the effectual management thereof with God for us; and, withal, the infinite number of times that we by sin provoke him to spue us out of his mouth, instead of interceding for us, and the many times also that his intercession is repeated by the repeating of our faults, and this love still passes knowledge, and is by us to be wondered at. What did, or what doth, the Lord Jesus see in us to be at all this care, and pains, and cost to save us? What will he get of us by the bargain but a small pittance of thanks and love? for so it is, and ever will be, when compared with his matchless and unspeakable love and kindness towards us.

Oh, how unworthy are we of this love! How little do we think of it! But, most of all, the angels may be astonished to see how little we are affected with that of which we pretend to know. But neither can this prevail with him to put us out of the scroll in which all the names of them are written for whom he doth make intercession to God. Let us cry, Grace, grace unto it.

Fourth, Hence again I infer that they shall be saved that come to God by Christ, when the devil and sin have done what they can to hinder it.

This is clear, for that the strife is now, who shall be lord of all, whether Satan, the prince of this world, or Christ Jesus, the Son of God ; or which can lay the best claim to God's elect, he that produceth their sins against them, or he that laid down his heart's blood a price of redemption for them. Who, then, shall condemn when Christ has died, and doth also make intercession ? Stand still, angels, and behold how the Father divideth his Son 'a portion with the great;' and how he divideth 'the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' Is. liii. 12. The grace of God and blood of Christ will, before the end of the world, make brave work among the sons of men ! They shall come to a wonderment to God by Christ, and be saved by a wonderment for Christ's sake—'Behold these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim.' Is. xlix. 12.

Behold, these, and these, and these shall come, and lo, these, and these, and these from the land of Sinim ! This is to denote the abundance that shall come in to God by Christ towards the latter end of the world—namely, when Antichrist is gone to bed in the sides of the pit's mouth ; then shall nations come in and be saved, and shall walk in

the light of the Lord.* But, I say, what encouragement would there be for sinners thus to do if that the Lord Jesus by his intercession were not able to save 'even to the uttermost' them that come unto God by him.

Fifth, Hence again I infer that *here is ground for confidence to them that come to God by Christ*. Confidence to the end becomes us who have such a High Priest, such an Intercessor as Jesus Christ; who would dishonour such a Jesus by doubting that, that all the devils in hell cannot discourage by all their wiles? He is a tried stone, he is a sure foundation; a man may confidently venture his soul in his hand, and not fear but he will bring him safe home. Ability, love to the person, and faithfulness to trust committed to him, will do all; and all these are with infinite fulness in him. He has been a Saviour these four thousand years already—two thousand before the law, two thousand in the time of the law—besides the

* Bunyan saw that time very far off, which much more nearly approaches us: when Antichrist, or the interference of the state with matters of faith and worship, will find a grave in the side of the pit's mouth; when no national barriers, either Pagan, Popish, or Protestant, shall exist to prevent the glorious spread of pure and vital Christianity. And, however abundant that harvest of souls shall be, there will prove a superabundance of grace in Christ to supply all their wants. *He was, is now, and ever will be 'a complete Saviour.'*—Ed.

sixteen hundred years he has in his flesh continued to make intercession for them that come unto God by him. Yet the day is to come, yea, will never come, that he can be charged with any fault, or neglect of the salvation of any of them that at any time have come unto God by him. What ground, then, is here for confidence that Christ will make a good end with me, since I come unto God by him, and since he ever liveth to make intercession for me. Let me, then, honour him, I say, by setting on his head the crown of his undertakings for me, by the believing that he is able to save me 'even to the uttermost, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for me.'

Sixth, Hence also I infer that *Christ ought to bear and wear the glory of our salvation for ever.* He has done it, he has wrought it out. 'Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.' Do not sacrifice to your own inventions, do not give glory to the work of your own hands. Your reformati^ons, your works, your good deeds, and all the glory of your doing, cast them at the feet of this High Priest, and confess that glory belongs unto him—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' Re. v. 12. 'And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, the offspring and the issue, all

vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.' Is. xxii. 24. Oh ! the work of our redemption by Christ is such as wanteth not provocation to us to bless, and praise, and glorify Jesus Christ. Saints, set to the work and glorify him in your body and in your souls ; him who has bought us with a price, and glorify God and the Father by him. 1 Co. vi. 20.

THE USE.

I come now to make some use of this discourse ; and,

USE FIRST, Let me exhort you to the study of this, as of other the truths of our Lord Jesus Christ. The priestly office of Christ is the first and great thing that is presented to us in the gospel—namely, how that he died for our sins, and gave himself to the cross, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us through him. 1 Co. xv. 1–6. Ga. iii. 13–16. But now because this priestly office of his is divided into two parts, and because one of them—to wit, this of his intercession—is to be accomplished for us within the veil, therefore, as we say among men, out of sight out of mind, he is too much as to this forgotten by us. We satisfy ourselves with the slaying of the sacrifice ; we look not enough after our Aaron as he goes into the holiest, *there to sprinkle the mercy-seat with blood upon*

our account. God forbid that the least syllable of what I say should be intended by me, or construed by others, as if I sought to diminish the price paid by Christ for our redemption in this world. But since his dying is his laying down his price, and his intercession the urging and managing the worthiness of it in the presence of God against Satan, there is glory to be found therein, and we should look after him into the holy place. The second part of the work of the high priests under the law, had great glory and sanctity put upon it; forasmuch as the holy garments were provided for him to officiate in within the veil, also it was there that the altar stood on which he offered incense; also there was the mercy-seat and the cherubims of glory, which were figures of the angels, that love to be continually looking and prying into the management of this second part of the priesthood of Christ in the presence of God; for although themselves are not the persons so immediately concerned therein as we, yet the management of it, I say, is with so much grace, and glory, and wisdom, and effectualness, that it is a heaven to the angels to see it. Oh! to enjoy the odorous scent, and sweet memorial, the heart-refreshing perfumes, that ascend continually from the mercy-seat to the 'above' where God is; and also to behold how effectual it is to the end for which it is designed, is glorious; and he that is not somewhat ~~let into~~

this by the grace of God, there is a great thing lacking to his faith, and he misseth of many a sweet bit that he might otherwise enjoy. Wherefore, I say, be exhorted to the study of this part of Christ's work in the managing of our salvation for us. And the ceremonies of the law may be a great help to you as to this, for though they be out of use now as to practice, yet the signification of them is rich, and that from which many gospelers* have got much. Wherefore I advise that you read the five books of Moses often; yea, read, and read again, and do not despair of help to understand something of the will and mind of God therein, though you think they are fast locked up from you. Neither trouble your heads though you have not commentaries and expositions; pray and read, and read and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal from men. Also, what is from men is uncertain, and is often lost and tumbled over and over by men; but what is from God is fixed as a nail in a sure place. I know there are [peculiar] times of temptation, but I speak now as to the common course of Chris-

* 'Gospelers,' a nickname given to the Reformers, when first a holy band determined, at the imminent risk of life, to read the New Testament or Gospels in English. It was like the term *Methodist*, a few years ago. The gospel has now so much spread, that these terms of reproach are only used by *fanatics*.—Ed.

tianity. There is nothing that so abides with us as what we receive from God ; and the reason why Christians at this day are at such a loss as to some things is, because they are content with what comes from men's mouths, without searching and kneeling before God, to know of him the truth of things. Things that we receive at God's hand come to us as things from the *minting house*, though old in themselves, yet new to us. Old truths are always new to us if they come to us with the smell of heaven upon them. I speak not this because I would have people despise their ministers, but to show that there is nowadays so much idleness among professors as hinders them from a diligent search after things, and makes them take up short of that that is sealed by the Spirit of testimony to the conscience. Witness the great decays at this day amongst us, and that strange revolting from truth once professed by us.

USE SECOND, As I would press you to an earnest study and search after this great truth, so I would press you to a diligent improvement of it to yourselves and to others. To know truth for knowledge's sake is short of a gracious disposition of soul ; and to communicate truth out of a desire of praise and vain-glory for so doing is also a swerving from godly simplicity ; but to improve what I know for the good of myself and others is *true Christianity* indeed. Now truths received

may be improved with respect to myself and others, and that several ways—

1. To myself, when I search after the power that belongs to those notions that I have received of truth. There belongs to every true notion of truth a power; the notion is the shell—the power is the kernel and life. Without this last, truth doth me no good, nor those to whom I communicate it. Hence Paul said to the Corinthians, ‘When I come to you again, I will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.’ 1 Co. iv. 19, 20. Search, then, after the power of what thou knowest, for it is the power that will do thee good. Now this will not be got but by earnest prayer, and much attending upon God; also there must not be admitted by thee that thy heart be stuffed with cumbering cares of this world, for they are of a choking nature.

Take heed of slighting that little that thou hast; a good improvement of little is the way to make that little thrive, and the way to obtain additions thereto: ‘He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.’ Lu. xvi. 10.

2. Improve them to others, and that, (1.) By *labouring to instil them upon their hearts by good and wholesome words, presenting all to them with*

the authority of the Scriptures. (2.) Labour to enforce those instillings on them by showing them by thy life the peace, the glorious effects that they have upon thy soul.

Lastly, Let this doctrine give thee boldness to come to God. Shall Jesus Christ be interceding in heaven? Oh, then, be thou a praying man on earth; yea, take courage to pray. Think thus with thyself—I go to God, to God, before whose throne the Lord Jesus is ready to hand my petitions to him; yea, ‘he ever lives to make intercession for me.’ This is a great encouragement to come to God by prayers and supplications for ourselves, and by intercessions for our families, our neighbours, and enemies. Farewell.





THE STRAIT GATE;

OR,

GREAT DIFFICULTY OF GOING TO HEAVEN.

BY JOHN BUNYAN.

*'Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life,
and few there be that find it.'*—Matt. vii. 14.

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THE STRAIT GATE;

OR,

GREAT DIFFICULTY OF GOING TO HEAVEN:

PLAINLY PROVING, BY THE SCRIPTURES, THAT NOT ONLY THE
RUDE AND PROFANE, BUT MANY GREAT PROFESSORS,
WILL COME SHORT OF THAT KINGDOM.

'Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'—Mat. vii. 13, 14.

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

IF any uninspired writer has been entitled to the name of Boanerges, or a son of thunder, it is the author of the following treatise. Here we have a most searching and faithful display of the straitness or exact dimensions of that all-important gate, which will not suffer many professors to pass into the kingdom of heaven, encumbered as they are with fatal errors. Still 'it is no little pinching wicket, but wide enough for all the truly gracious and sincere lovers of Jesus Christ; while it is so strait, that no others can by any means enter in.' p. 20. This is a subject calculated to rouse and stimulate all genuine professors to solemn inquiry; and it was peculiarly intended to dart at, and fix

convictions upon, the multitudes of hypocritical professors who abounded in Bunyan's time, especially under the reigns of the later Stuarts.

During the Protectorate, wickedness was discountenanced, and skulked in the holes and corners of Mansoul; but when a debauched monarch, who had taken refuge in the most licentious court in Europe, was called to occupy the throne of his fathers, the most abandoned profligacy and profaneness were let loose upon the nation. Vice was openly patronized, while virtue and religion were as openly treated with mockery and contempt. Bunyan justly says, 'The text calls for sharpness, so do the times.' p. 7. 'With those whose religion lieth in some circumstantial, the kingdom swarms at this day.' p. 108. When they stand at the gate, they will 'shake like a quagmire—their feigned faith, pretended love, shows of gravity, and holiday words, will stand them in little stead; some professors do with religion just as people do with their best apparel—hang it on the wall all the week, and put it on on Sundays; they save it till they go to a meeting, or meet with a godly chapman.' pp. 62, 63. This state of society called for peculiar sharpness, and Bunyan preached and published, in 1676, this awful alarm to professors. No subject could be more peculiarly applicable than 'The Gate of heaven,' and 'the difficulties of entering in thereat;' a *subject of the deepest interest to all mankind—to sti-*

mislead the careless to find, and to enter the gate of this the only city of refuge from eternal misery—to fill the heart of God's children with love and joy in their prospects of a blessed immortality—and to sting the hypocrites with the awful thought of finding the gate shut against them for ever. Their cries and tears will be too late; they will stand without and vehemently cry, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us;' in vain will be their outcry, 'the devils are coming; Lord, Lord, the pit opens her mouth upon us; Lord, Lord, there is nothing but hell and damnation left us, if thou hast not mercy upon us.'

p. 61. These were professors who pretended to have found the gate and way to heaven; who passed for pilgrims who were seeking a better, even a heavenly country; such deluded victims must be, of all men, the most miserable.

Faithfulness becomes the ministers of Christ in dealing with the souls of men; and pre-eminently faithful is John Bunyan in this treatise. Reader, he will be clear of thy blood. Enter upon the solemn inquiry, Have I sought the gate? Shall I be admitted into, or shut out from, that blessed kingdom? The openly profane can have no hope. Are you a professor?—there is danger still. In vain will it be to urge, 'We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils.' To the secretly profane, whatever may be their profession, there can be no well-grounded hope of entrance

in at this gate. Those only will be admitted whom the Lord knows to be his—the sheep of his pasture, who have heard his voice, and obeyed it. Against all others the door will be shut, and the awful words, ‘I know you not—depart, ye cursed,’ will hurry them to eternal darkness. The question, ‘Are there few that be saved?’ will suggest itself to our minds; may the answer fix upon our consciences, ‘STRIVE to enter in.’ It is very probable that it was in preaching upon this text, Bunyan was assailed with a want of charity. The anecdote is thus narrated by Mr. Doe in *The Struggler*:—‘As Mr. Bunyan was preaching in a barn, and showing the fewness of those that should be saved, there stood one of the learned to take advantage of his words; and having done preaching, the schoolman said to him, You are a deceiver, a person of no charity, and therefore not fit to preach; for he that (in effect) condemneth the greatest part of his hearers hath no charity, and therefore is not fit to preach. Then Mr. Bunyan answered, The Lord Jesus Christ preached in a ship to his hearers on the shore, *Mat. xiii.*, and showed that they were as four sorts of ground, the highway, the stony, the thorny, and the good ground, but those represented by the good ground were the only persons to be saved. And your position is, That he that in effect condemneth the greatest part of his hearers, hath *no charity*, and therefore is not fit to preach the

gospel. But here the Lord Jesus Christ did so, then your conclusion is, The Lord Jesus Christ wanted charity, and therefore was not fit to preach the gospel. Horrid blasphemy; away with your hellish logic, and speak Scripture.' Of one thing we are certain, that while hollow-hearted hypocritical professors will ever complain of faithful dealing with their soul's eternal interests; the sincere and humble Christian will be most thankful for searching inquiries, that, if wrong, he may be set right before his final destiny is irrevocably fixed. May our souls submit to a scriptural measurement of this gate, and the terms upon which alone it can be opened unto us.

The difficulties that prevent 'the many' from entering in are, 1. Forgetfulness that we can only enter heaven by the permission of the law—every jot and tittle must be fulfilled. Now, if we could live from our conversion to our death in the holiest obedience to all its precepts, yet, having previously violated them, the stain must not only be washed away in the blood of atonement, but we, as part of the body of Christ, must, in him, render perfect obedience. 2. In addition to the disinclination of our hearts to submit to this perfect righteousness, we have outward storms of temptation and persecution. 'The world will seek to keep thee out of heaven with mocks, flouts, taunts, threats, jails, gibbets, halters, burnings, and a thousand deaths,

therefore strive! Again, if it cannot overcome thee with these, it will flatter, promise, allure, entice, entreat, and use a thousand tricks on this hand to destroy thee; and many that have been stout against the threats of the world have yet been overcome with the bewitching flatteries of the same. O that we may by grace escape all these enemies, and so strive as to enter into the joy of our Lord.'

GEO. OFFOR.

TO THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER,

GOD, I hope, hath put it into my heart to write unto thee another time, and that about matters of greatest moment—for now we discourse not about things controverted among the godly, but directly about the saving or damning of the soul; yea, moreover, this discourse is about the fewness of them that shall be saved, and it proves that many a high professor will come short of eternal life; wherefore the matter must needs be sharp, and so disliked by some, but let it not be rejected by thee. The text calls for sharpness, so do the times, yea, the faithful discharge of my duty towards thee hath put me upon it.

I do not now pipe, but mourn; and it will be well for thee if thou canst graciously lament. *Mat. xi. 17.* Some, say they, make the gate of heaven too wide, and some make it too narrow; for my part, I have here presented thee with as true a measure of it as by the Word of God I can. Read me, therefore, yea, read me, and compare me with

the Bible; and if thou findest my doctrine and that book of God concur, embrace it, as thou wilt answer the contrary in the day of judgment. This awakening work—if God will make it so—was prepared for thee: if there be need, and it wounds, get healing by blood: if it disquiets, get peace by blood: if it takes away all thou hast, because it was naught (for this book is not prepared to take away true grace from any), then buy of Christ ‘gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.’ Re. iii. 18. Self-flatteries, self-deceivings, are easy and pleasant, but damnable. The Lord give thee a heart to judge right of thyself, right of this book, and so to prepare for eternity, that thou mayest not only expect entrance, but be received into the kingdom of Christ and of God. Amen.

So prays thy Friend,

1678.

JOHN BUNYAN.

THE STRAIT GATE.

'STRIVE TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE; FOR MANY, I SAY UNTO YOU, WILL SEEK TO ENTER IN, AND SHALL NOT BE ABLE.'—LUKE XIII. 24.

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are, therefore, in especial manner to be heeded; besides, the subject matter of the words is the most weighty, to wit, how we should attain salvation, and therefore also to be heeded.

The occasion of the words was a question which one that was at this time in the company of the disciples put to Jesus Christ; the question was this, 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' ver. 23. A serious question, not such as tended to the subversion of the hearers, as too many now-a-days do; but such as in its own nature tended to the awakening of the company to good, and that called for such an answer that might profit the people also. This question also well pleased Jesus Christ, and he prepareth and giveth such an answer as was without the least retort, or show of distaste; such

an answer, I say, as carried in it the most full resolve to the question itself, and help to the persons questioning. 'And he said unto them, Strive to enter in,' &c. The words are *an answer*, and *an instruction* also. *First*. An answer, and that in the affirmative; the gate is strait—many that seek will not be able, therefore but few shall be saved. *Second*. The answer is an instruction also; 'strive to enter in,' &c., good counsel and instruction; pray God help me, and my reader, and all that love their own salvation, to take it.

My manner of handling the words will be—FIRST, *By way of explication*; and then [SECOND], *By way of observation*.

FIRST. [THE WORDS] BY WAY OF EXPLICATION.

The words are to be considered, FIRST, with reference to their *general scope*; and then [SECOND], with reference to their several phrases.

FIRST. *The general scope* of the text is to be considered, and that is that great thing—salvation; for these words do immediately look at, point to, and give directions about salvation: 'Are there few that be saved? Strive to enter in at the strait gate.'

The words, I say, are to direct us not only to talk of, or to wish for, but to understand how we



shall, and to seek that we may be, effectually saved, and therefore of the greatest importance. To be saved! what is like being saved? To be saved from sin, from hell, from the wrath of God, from eternal damnation, what is like it? To be made an heir of God, of his grace, of his kingdom, and eternal glory, what is like it? and yet all this is included in this word *saved*, and in the answer to that question, 'Are there few that be saved?' Indeed this word *SAVED* is but of little use in the world, save to them that are heartily afraid of damning. This word lies in the Bible as excellent salves lie in some men's houses, thrust into a hole, and not thought on for many months, because the household people have no wounds nor sores. In time of sickness, what so set by as the doctor's glasses and gally-pots full of his excellent things? but when the person is grown well, the rest is thrown to the dunghill.* O when men are sick of sin, and afraid of damning, what a text is that where this word *saved* is found! Yea, what a word of worth, and goodness, and blessedness, is it to him that lies continually upon the wrath of a guilty

* However homely this illustration, yet how striking. No family has been many years without that uneasy anxiety—earnest seeking the doctor to alleviate their sufferings, or those of a beloved relative, and then the trembling hope that 'his excellent things' may produce the desired effect. Reader, have you had, at any time, equal anxiety for your soul's health and salvation? What has been the result?—Eu.

conscience? ‘But the whole need not a physician;’ he therefore, and he only, knows what *saved* means, that knows what hell, and death, and damnation means. ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ is the language of the trembling sinner. ‘Lord save me,’ is the language of the sinking sinner; and none admire the glory that is in that word *saved*, but such as see, without being saved, all things in heaven and earth are emptiness to them. They also that believe themselves privileged in all the blessedness that is wrapt up in that word, bless and admire God that hath saved them. Wherefore, since the thing intended, both in the question and the answer, is no less than the salvation of the soul, I beseech you to give the more earnest heed. He xii. But,

SECOND. To come to the *particular phrases* in the words, and to handle them orderly, in the words I find four things. *First*. An intimation of the kingdom of heaven. *Second*. A description of the entrance into it. *Third*. An exhortation to enter into it. And, *Fourth*, A motive to enforce that exhortation.

[AN INTIMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.]

First. An intimation of the kingdom of heaven; for when he saith, ‘Strive to enter in,’ and in such phrases, there is supposed a place or state, or both, to be enjoyed. ‘Enter in;’ enter into what, or

whither, but into a state or place, or both ? and therefore when you read this word, 'enter in,' you must say there is certainly included in the text that good thing that yet is not expressed. 'Enter in;' into heaven, that is the meaning, where the saved are, and shall be; into heaven, that place, that glorious place, where God, and Christ, and angels are, and the souls or spirits of just men made perfect. 'Enter in;' that thing included, though not expressed in the words, is called in another place the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven. *He. xii. 22.* And therefore the words signify unto us, that there is a state most glorious, and that when this world is ended; and that this place and state are likewise to be enjoyed, and inherited by a generation of men for ever. Besides, this word, 'enter in,' signifieth that salvation to the full is to be enjoyed only there, and that there only is eternal safety; all other places and conditions are hazardous, dangerous, full of snares, imperfections, temptations, and afflictions, but there all is well; there is no devil to tempt, no desperately wicked heart to deliver us up, no deceitful lust to entangle, nor any enchanting world to bewitch us. There all shall be well to all eternity. Further, all the parts of, and circumstances that attend salvation, are only there to be enjoyed;

there only is immortality and eternal life; there is the glory and fulness of joy, and the everlasting pleasures; there is God and Christ to be enjoyed by open vision, and more; there are the angels and the saints; further, there is no death, nor sickness, no sorrow nor sighing for ever; there is no pain, nor persecutor, nor darkness, to eclipse our glory. O this Mount Zion! O this heavenly Jerusalem! 2 Co. v. 1—4. Ps. xvi. 11. Lu. xx. 35, 36. He. xii. 22—24.

Behold, therefore, what a great thing the Lord Jesus hath included by this little word, 'IN.' In this word is wrapt up a whole heaven and eternal life; even as there is also by other little words in the holy Scriptures of truth: as where he saith, 'Knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' and 'the election hath obtained it.' This should teach us, not only to read, but to attend in reading; not only to read, but to lift up our hearts to God in reading; for if we be not heedful, if he gives us not light and understanding, we may easily pass over, without any great regard, such a word as may have a glorious kingdom and eternal salvation in the bowels of it; yea, sometimes, as here, a whole heaven is intimated, where it is not at all expressed. The apostles of old did use to fetch great things out of the Scriptures, even out of the very order and timing of the several things contained therein. See Ro. iv. 9—11. Ga. iii. 16, 17. He. viii. 13. But,

[DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTRANCE INTO THIS KINGDOM.]

Second. As we have here an intimation of the kingdom of heaven, so we have a description of the entrance into it, and that by a double similitude: I. It is called a gate; II. A strait gate—‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate.’

[*It is called a gate.*]

I. It is set forth by the similitude of a gate. A gate, you know, is of a double use. It is to open and shut, and so, consequently, to let in or to keep out; and to do both these at the season; as he said, ‘Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot;’ and again, ‘I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath.’ *Ne. vii. 3; xiii. 19, 20.* And so you find of this gate of heaven, when the five wise virgins came, the gate was opened; but afterwards came the other virgins, and the door was shut. *Mat. xxv.* So then, the entrance into heaven is called a gate, to show there is a time when there may be entrance, and there will come a time when there shall be none; and, indeed, this is a chief truth contained in the text—‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.’ I read in the Scriptures of two

gates or doors, through which they that go to heaven must enter.*

1. There is the door of faith, the door which the grace of God hath opened to the Gentiles. This door is Jesus Christ, as also himself doth testify, saying, 'I am the door,' &c. Jn. x. 9. Ac. xiv. 27. By this door men enter into God's favour and mercy, and find forgiveness through faith in his blood, and live in hope of eternal life; and therefore himself also hath said, 'I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved;' that is, received to mercy, and inherit eternal life. But,

2. There is another door or gate—for that which is called in the text a gate, is twice in the next verse called a door—there is, I say, another gate, and that is the passage into the very heaven itself; the entrance into the celestial mansion-house, and that is the gate mentioned in the text,† and the

* How delightfully but solemnly is this illustrated in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' The wicket-gate, at the head of the way, at which the poor burdened sinner must knock and obtain an entrance by Christ the door. It may be like Mercy, with a trembling but sure hope. And then the glorious entrance into the Celestial City itself, after crossing the river which has no bridge. This was opened to Christian, but shut against Ignorance and against Turnaway of the Town or Apostasy.—Ed.

† Much confusion appears to exist in the minds of many in reference to the 'strait gate' mentioned in the text, as this passage is frequently introduced into exhortations to the unconverted. It is addressed exclusively to *professors* of reli-

door mentioned twice in the verse that follows. And this Jacob called it, when he said, Bethel was the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven; that is, the entrance, for he saw the entrance into heaven. One end of Jacob's ladder stands in Bethel, God's house, and the other end reacheth up to the gate of heaven. Ge. xxviii. 10—17. Jacob's ladder was the figure of Christ, which ladder was not the gate of heaven, but the way from the church to that gate which he saw above at the top of the ladder. Ge. xxviii. 12. Jn. i. 51. But again, that the gate in the text is the gate or entrance into heaven, consider—

(1.) It is that gate that letteth men into, or shutteth men out of that place or kingdom where Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob is, which place is that paradise where Christ promised the thiet that he should be that day, that he asked to be with him in his kingdom; it is that place into

gion—to those who profess to have set out for the Celestial City, and seems to say, Beware of the *form* of godliness without its *power*—of the profession without the possession! For, as old Mason truly said, 'They fall deepest into hell that fall *backward*.' The 'striving' here alluded to refers to the whole course of the believer's life, with its *end* in view—'We *labour* to be accepted of him.' 'Give *diligence*,' by adding to faith virtue, &c., 'to make your calling and election sure; for so an *entrance* shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' 2 Pe. i. 5-11,

which Paul said he was caught, when he heard words unlawful or impossible for a man to utter.

Lu. xiii. 28; xxiii. 42. 2 Co. xii. 1-6.

Quest. But is not Christ the gate or entrance into this heavenly place?

Answ. He is he without whom no man can get thither, because by his merits men obtain that world, and also because he, as the Father, is the donor and disposer of that kingdom to whom he will. Further, this place is called his house, and himself the Master of it—'When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door.' Lu. xiii. 25. But we use to say, that the master of the house is not the door. Men enter into heaven, then, by him, not as he is the gate, or door, or entrance, into the celestial mansion-house, but as he is the giver and disposer of that kingdom to them whom he shall count worthy, because he hath obtained it for them.

(2.) That this gate is the very passage into heaven, consider the text hath special reference to the day of judgment, when Christ will have laid aside his mediatory office, which before he exercised for the bringing to the faith his own elect; and will then act, not as one that justifieth the ungodly, but as one that judgeth sinners. He will now be risen up from the throne of grace, and shut up the door against all the impenitent,

and will be set upon the throne of judgment, from thence to proceed with ungodly sinners.

Object. But Christ bids strive: 'Strive' now 'to enter in at the strait gate;' but if that gate be as you say, the gate or entrance into heaven, then it should seem that we should not strive till the day of judgment, for we shall not come at that gate till then.

Answ. Christ, by this exhortation, Strive, &c., doth not at all admit of, or countenance delays, or that a man should neglect his own salvation; but putteth poor creatures upon preparing for the judgment, and counselleth them now to get those things that will then give them entrance into glory. This exhortation is much like these: 'Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.—And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.' *Mat. xxiv. 44; xxv. 10.*

So that when he saith, 'Strive to enter in,' it is as if he should say, Blessed are they that shall be admitted another day to enter into the kingdom of heaven; but they that shall be counted worthy of so unspeakable a favour, must be well prepared and fitted for it beforehand. Now, the time to be fitted is not the day of judgment, but the day of grace; not then, but now. Therefore, strive now for those things that will then give you entrance into the heavenly kingdom. But,

[*It is called a strait gate.*]

II. As it is called a gate, so it is called a strait gate—‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate.’

The straitness of this gate is not to be understood carnally, but mystically. You are not to understand it, as if the entrance into heaven was some little pinching wicket; no, the straitness of this gate is quite another thing. This gate is wide enough for all them that are the truly gracious and sincere lovers of Jesus Christ, but so strait, as that not one of the other can by any means enter in: ‘Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the Lord: this gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.’ Ps. cxviii. 19, 20. By this word, therefore, Christ Jesus hath showed unto us, that without due qualifications there is no possibility of entering into heaven; the strait gate will keep all others out. When Christ spake this parable, he had doubtless his eye upon some passage or passages of the Old Testament, with which the Jews were well acquainted. I will mention two, and so go on.

1. The place by which God turned Adam and his wife out of paradise. Possibly our Lord might have his eye upon that; for though that was wide enough for them to come out at, yet it was too *strait* for them to go in at. But what should be

the reason of that? Why, they had sinned; and therefore God 'placed at the east of that garden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.' Ge. iii. 24. The cherubims, and the flaming sword, they made the entrance too strait for them to enter in. Souls, there are cherubims and a flaming sword at the gates of heaven to keep the way of the tree of life; therefore none but them that are duly fitted for heaven can enter in at this strait gate; the flaming sword will keep all others out. 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' 1 Co. vi. 9, 10.

(2.) Perhaps our Lord might have his eye upon the gates of the temple when he spoke this word unto the people; for though the gates of the temple were six cubits wide, yet they were so strait, that none that were unclean in anything might enter in thereat, Eze. xl. 48; because there were placed at these gates, porters, whose office was to look that none but those that had right to enter might go in thither. And so it is written, Jehoiada set 'porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none *which was* unclean in anything

should enter in.' 2 CH. xiii. 19. Souls, God hath porters at the gates of the temple, at the gate of heaven; porters, I say, placed there by God, to look that none that are unclean in anything may come in thither. In at the gate of the church, none may enter now that are openly profane, and scandalous to religion; no, though they plead they are beloved of God: 'What hath my beloved to do in mine house,' saith the Lord, '*seeing* she hath wrought lewdness with many?' Ja. ii. 15.

I say, I am very apt to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ had his thoughts upon these two texts, when he said the gate is strait: and that which confirms me the more in the thing is this, a little below the text he saith, 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of heaven, and you *yourselves* thrust out.' Lu. xiii. 28. Thrust out, which signifieth a violent act, resisting with striving those that would—though unqualified—enter. The porters of the temple were, for this very thing, to wear arms, if need were, and to be men of courage and strength, lest the unsanctified or unprepared should by some means enter in. We read, in the book of Revelations, of the holy city, and that it had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; but what did they do there? Why, amongst the *rest* of their service, this was one thing, that there

might 'in no wise enter in to it any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or that *maketh* a lie.' *Re. xxi. 27.*

[Three things that make this gate so strait.]

But more particularly, to show what it is that maketh this gate so strait. There are three things that make it strait—1. There is *sin*. 2. There is *the word of the law*. 3. There are *the angels of God*.

1. There is *sin*; the sin of the profane, and the sin of the professor.

(1.) The sin of the profane. But this needs not be enlarged upon, because it is concluded upon at all hands, where there is the common belief of the being of God, and the judgment to come, that 'the wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.' *Ps. ix. 17.*

(2.) But there is the sin of professors; or take it rather thus, there is a profession that will stand with an unsanctified heart and life. The sin of such will overpoise the salvation of their souls, the sin end being the heaviest end of the scale; I say, that being the heaviest end which hath sin in it, they tilt over, and so are, notwithstanding their glorious profession, drowned in perdition and destruction; for none such hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God; therefore 'let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the

children of disobedience;' neither will a profession be able to excuse them. Ep. v. 3-6. The gate will be too strait for such as these to enter in thereat. A man may partake of salvation in part, but not of salvation in whole. God saved the children of Israel out of Egypt, but overthrew them in the wilderness:—' I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.' Jude 5. So we see that, notwithstanding their beginning, 'they could not enter in. because of unbelief.' He. iii. 19.

2. There is *the word of the law*, and that will make the gate strait also. None must go in thereat but those that can go in by the *leave* of the law; for though no man be, or can be, justified by the works of the law, yet unless the righteousness and holiness by which they attempt to enter into this kingdom be justified by the law, it is in vain once to think of entering in at this strait gate. Now the law justifieth not, but upon the account of Christ's righteousness; if therefore thou be not indeed found in that righteousness, thou wilt find the law lie just in the passage into heaven to keep thee out. Every man's work must be tried by fire, that it may be manifest of what sort it is. There are two errors in the world about the law; *one is*, when men think to enter in at the strait

gate by the righteousness of the law; the other is, when men think they may enter into heaven without the leave of the law. Both these, I say, are errors; for as by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified; so without the *consent* of the law, no flesh shall be saved. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of the law shall fail, till all be fulfilled.' He therefore must be damned that cannot be saved by the consent of the law. And, indeed, this law is the flaming sword that turneth every way; yea, that lieth to this day in the way to heaven, for a bar to all unbelievers and unsanctified professors; for it is taken out of the way for the truly gracious only. It will be found as a roaring lion to devour all others. Because of the law, therefore, the gate will be found too strait for the unsanctified to enter in. When the apostle had told the Corinthians that 'the unrighteous should not inherit the kingdom of God,' and that such were some of them, he adds, 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' 1 Co. vi. 9-11. Closely concluding, that had they not been washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the law, for their transgressions, would have kept them out; it would have made the gate too strait for them to enter in.

3. There are also *the angels of God*, and by

reason of them the gate is strait. The Lord Jesus calleth the end of the world his harvest; and saith, moreover, that the angels are his reapers. These angels are therefore to gather his wheat into his barn, but to gather the ungodly into bundles to burn them. *Mat. xiii. 39, 41, 49.* Unless, therefore, the man that is unsanctified can master the law, and conquer angels; unless he can, as I may say, pull them out of the gateway of heaven, himself is not to come thither for ever. No man goeth to heaven but by the help of the angels—I mean at the day of judgment. For the Son of man ‘shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’ *Mat. xxiv. 31.* If those that shall enter in at the strait gate shall enter in thither by the conduct of the holy angels, pray when do you think those men will enter in thither, concerning whom the angels are commanded to gather them, to ‘bind them in bundles to burn them?’ This, therefore, is a third difficulty. The angels will make this entrance strait; yea, too strait for the unjustified and unsanctified to enter in thither.

[AN EXHORTATION TO STRIVE TO ENTER INTO THIS KINGDOM.]

Third. I come now to the exhortation, which is, *to strive to enter in.* ‘Strive to enter in at the

strait gate.' These words are fitly added; for since the gate is strait, it follows that they that will enter in must strive.

'Strive.' This word *strive* supposeth that great idleness is natural to professors; they think to get to heaven by lying, as it were, on their elbows. It also suggesteth that many will be the difficulties that professors will meet with, before they get to heaven. It also concludeth that only the labouring Christian, man or woman, will get in thither. 'Strive,' &c.

Three questions I will propound upon the word, an answer to which may give us light into the meaning of it: I. What doth this word *strive* import? * II. How should we strive? III. Why should we strive?

[*Import of the word STRIVE.*]

I. What doth this word *strive* import? Answer,

1. When he saith, Strive, it is as much as to say, Bend yourselves to the work with all your might. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.' Ec. ix. 10. Thus Samson did when he set himself to destroy the Philistines; 'He bowed

* How well does our unlettered author give the meaning of 'Aγανίζεσθε, *strive, agonize.*—ED.

mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do* it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.' 1 Co. ix. 25. Most professors give leave to the world and the vanity of their hearts, to close with them, and to hang about their necks, and make their striving to stand rather in an outcry of words, than a hearty labour against the lusts and love of the world, and their own corruptions; but this kind of striving is but a beating of the air, and will come to just nothing at last. 1 Co. ix. 26.

4. He that striveth lawfully, must take God and Christ along with him to the work, otherwise he will certainly be undone. 'Whereunto,' said Paul, 'I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.' Col. i. 29. And for the right performing of this, he must observe these following particulars:—

(1.) He must take heed that he doth not strive about things, or words, to no profit; for God will not then be with him. 'Of these things,' saith the apostle, 'put *them* in remembrance; charging *them* before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.' 2 Ti. ii. 14. But, alas! how many professors in our days are guilty of this transgression, whose religion stands chiefly, if not only, in a few unprofitable questions and vain wranglings about words and things to no profit, but to the destruction of the hearers!

(2.) He must take heed that whilst he strives against one sin, he does not harbour and shelter another; or that whilst he cries out against other men's sin, he does not countenance his own.

(3.) In the striving, strive to believe, strive for the faith of the gospel; for the more we believe the gospel, and the reality of the things of the world to come, with the more stomach and courage shall we labour to possess the blessedness. *Phi. i. 27.* 'Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.' *He. iv. 11.*

(4.) As we should strive for, and by faith, so we should strive by prayer, by fervent and effectual prayer. *Ro. xv. 30.* O the swarms of our prayerless professors! What do they think of themselves? Surely the gate of heaven was heretofore as wide as in these our days; but what striving by prayer was there then among Christians for the thing that gives admittance into this kingdom, over [what] there is in these latter days!

(5.) We should also strive by mortifying our members that are upon the earth. 'I therefore so run,' said Paul, 'not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached the gospel to others, I myself should be a cast-away.' *1 Co. ix. 24, 27.*

But all this is spoken principally to professors; so I would be understood.

[*Why should we strive?*]

III. I come now to the third question, namely, But why should we strive? Answer—

1. Because the thing for which you are here exhorted to strive, it is worth the striving for; it is for no less than for a whole heaven, and an eternity of felicity there. How will men that have before them a little honour, a little profit, a little pleasure, strive? I say again, how will they strive for this? Now they do it for a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. Methinks this word heaven, and this eternal life, ought verily to make us strive, for what is there again either in heaven or earth like them to provoke a man to strive?

2. Strive, because otherwise the devil and hell will assuredly have thee. He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Pa. v. 8. These fallen angels, they are always watchful, diligent, unwearied; they are also mighty, subtle, and malicious, seeking nothing more than the damnation of thy soul. O thou that art like the artless dove, strive!

3. Strive, because every lust strives and wars

against thy soul. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.' Ga. v. 17. 'Dearly beloved, I beseech *you*,' said Peter, 'as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' 1 Pe. ii. 11. It is a rare thing to see or find out a Christian that indeed can bridle his lusts; but no strange thing to see such professors that are 'not only bridled, but saddled too,' yea, and ridden from lust to sin, from one vanity to another, by the very devil himself, and the corruptions of their hearts.

4. Strive, because thou hast a whole world against thee. The world hateth thee if thou be a Christian; the men of the world hate thee; the things of the world are snares for thee, even thy bed and table, thy wife and husband, yea, thy most lawful enjoyments have that in them that will certainly sink thy soul to hell, if thou dost not strive against the snares that are in them.
Ro. xi. 9.

The world will seek to keep thee out of heaven with mocks, flouts, taunts, threatenings, jails, gibbets, halters, burnings, and a thousand deaths; therefore strive! Again, if it cannot overcome thee with these, it will flatter, promise, allure, entice, entreat, and use a thousand tricks on this hand to destroy thee; and observe, many that have been stout against the threats of the world, have yet been overcome with the bewitching flat-

teries of the same.* There ever was enmity betwixt the devil and the church, and betwixt his seed and her seed too; Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, these make war continually. Ge. iii. Re. xii. There hath been great desires and endeavours among men to reconcile these two in one, to wit, the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, but it could never yet be accomplished. The world says, they will never come over to us; and we again say, by God's grace, we will never come over to them. But the business hath not ended in words; both they and we have also added our endeavours to make each other submit, but endeavours have proved ineffectual too. They, for their part, have devised all manner of cruel torments to make us submit, as slaying with the sword, stoning, sawing asunder, flames, wild beasts, banishments, hunger, and a thousand miseries. We again, on the other side, have laboured by prayers and tears, by patience and long-suffering, by gentleness and

* Reader, while we bless God for being mercifully relieved from those bodily privations and sufferings through which our pilgrim fathers passed, forget not that Satan plies all his arts to allure our souls from the narrow path. If we are saved from tedious imprisonments in damp dungeons—if Antichrist has lost much of his power, the flatterer is ever at hand to entangle us in his net—the atheist is ever ready, by his derision and scorn, to drive us back to the City of Destruction.—Ed.

love, by sound doctrine and faithful witness-bearing against their enormities, to bring them over to us; but yet the enmity remains; so that they must conquer us, or we must conquer them. One side must be overcome; but the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.

5. Strive, because there is nothing of Christianity got by idleness. Idleness clothes a man with rags, and the vineyard of the slothful is grown over with nettles. Pr. xxiii. 21; xxiv. 30-32. Profession that is not attended with spiritual labour cannot bring the soul to heaven. The fathers before us were 'not slothful in business,' but 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Therefore 'be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' Ro. xii. 11. He. vi. 12.

'Strive to enter in.' Methinks the words, at the first reading, do intimate to us, that the Christian, in all that ever he does in this world, should carefully heed and regard his soul—I say, in all that ever he does. Many are for their souls by fits and starts; but a Christian indeed, in all his doing and designs which he contriveth and manageth in this world, should have a special eye to his own future and everlasting good; in all his labours he should strive to enter in: 'Wisdom (Christ) is the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.' Pr. iv. 7. Get nothing, if thou canst not get

Christ and grace, and further hopes of heaven in that getting; get nothing with a bad conscience, with the hazard of thy peace with God, and that in getting it thou weakenest thy graces which God hath given thee; for this is not to strive to enter in. Add grace to grace, both by religious and worldly duties; 'For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

2 Pe. i. 8-11. Religious *duties* are not the only striving times; he that thinks so is out. Thou mayest help thy faith and thy hope in the godly management of thy calling, and mayest get further footing in eternal life, by studying the glory of God in all thy worldly employment. I am speaking now to Christians that are justified freely by grace, and am encouraging, or rather counselling of them to strive to enter in; for there is an entering in by faith and good conscience now, as well as our entering in body and soul hereafter; and I must add, that the more common it is to thy soul to enter in now by faith, the more steadfast hope shalt thou have of entering in hereafter in body and soul.

'Strive to enter in.' By these words also the Lord Jesus giveth sharp rebuke to those professors that have not eternal glory, but other temporal things in their eye, by all the bustle that they *make* in the world about religion. Some there be,

what a stir they make, what a noise and clamour, with their notions and forms, and yet perhaps all is for the loaves; because they have eaten of the loaves, and are filled. *Jn. vi. 26.* These strive indeed to enter, but it is not into heaven; they find religion hath a good trade at the end of it, or they find that it is the way to credit, repute, preferment, and the like, and therefore they strive to enter into these. But these have not the strait gate in their eye, nor yet in themselves have they love to their poor and perishing souls; wherefore this exhortation nippeth such, by predicting of their damnation.

‘Strive to enter in.’ These words also sharply rebuke them who content themselves as the angel of the church of Sardis did, to wit, ‘to have a name to live, and be dead,’ *Re. iii. 1*; or as they of the Laodiceans, who took their religion upon trust, and were content with a poor, wretched, lukewarm profession; for such as these do altogether unlike to the exhortation in the text, that says, Strive, and they sit and sleep; that says, Strive to enter in, and they content themselves with a profession that is never like to bring them thither.

‘Strive to enter in.’ Further, these words put us upon proving the truth of our graces now; I say, they put us upon the proof of the truth of them now; for if the strait gate be the gate of heaven, and yet we are to strive to enter into it

now, even while we live, and before we come thither, then doubtless Christ means by this exhortation, that we should use all lawful means to prove our graces in this world, whether they will stand in the judgment or no. Strive to enter in; get those graces now that will prove true graces then, and therefore try those you have; and if, upon trial, they prove not right, cast them away, and cry for better, lest they cast thee away, when better are not to be had. 'Buy of me gold tried in the fire;' mark that. *Re. III. 18.* Buy of me faith and grace that will stand in the judgment; strive for that faith; buy of me that grace, and also white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy wickedness doth not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Mind you this advice; this is right striving to enter in.

But you will say, How should we try our graces? Would you have us run into temptation, to try if they be sound or rotten? *Answ.* You need not run into trials; God hath ordained that enough of them shall overtake thee to prove thy graces either rotten or sound before the day of thy death; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof, if thou hast but a sufficiency of grace to withstand. I say, thou shalt have trials enough overtake thee, to prove thy graces sound or rotten. Thou mayest, **therefore**, if God shall help thee, see how it is like

to go with thee before thou goest out of this world, to wit, whether thy graces be such as will carry thee in at the gates of heaven or no.

But how should we try our graces now? *Answ.* (a.) How dost thou find them in outward trials? See He. xi. 15, 16. (b.) How dost thou find thyself in the inward workings of sin? Ro. vii. 24. (c.) How dost thou find thyself under the most high enjoyment of grace in this world? Phi. iii. 14.

But what do you mean by these three questions? I mean graces show themselves at these their seasons, whether they be rotten or sound.

(a.) How do they show themselves to be true under the first of these? *Answ.* By mistrusting our own sufficiency, by crying to God for help, by desiring rather to die than to bring any dishonour to the name of God, and by counting that, if God be honoured in the trial, thou hast gained more than all the world could give thee. 2 Ch. xx. 12; xiv. 11. Ac. iv.; xx. 22. 2 Co. iv. 17, 18. He. xi. 24, 25.

(b.) How do they show themselves to be true under the second? *Answ.* By mourning, and confessing, and striving, and praying, against them; by not being content, shouldst thou have heaven, if they live, and defile thee; and by counting of holiness the greatest beauty in the world; and by flying to Jesus Christ for life. Zec. xii. 10. Jn. xix. He. xii. 14. Ps. xix. 12.

(c.) How do they show themselves to be true

under the third? *Ans.* By prizing the true graces above all the world; by praying heartily that God will give thee more; by not being content with all the grace thou canst be capable of enjoying on this side heaven and glory. Ps. lxxxiv. 10. Lu. xvii. 5. Phi. iii.

‘Strive to enter in.’ The reason why Christ addeth these words, ‘to enter in,’ is obvious, to wit, because there is no true and lasting happiness on this side heaven; I say, none that is both true and lasting, I mean, as to our sense and feeling as there shall [be]; ‘For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.’ He. xiii. 14. The heaven is within, strive therefore to enter in; the glory is within, strive therefore to enter in; the Mount Zion is within, strive therefore to enter in; the heavenly Jerusalem is within, strive therefore to enter in; angels and saints are within, strive therefore to enter in; and, to make up all, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that glorious Redeemer, is within, strive therefore to enter in.

‘Strive to enter in.’ ‘For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.’ Without are also the devils, and hell, and death, and all damned souls; without is howling, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; yea, *without* are all the miseries, sorrows, and plagues

that an infinite God can in justice and power inflict upon an evil and wicked generation; 'Strive therefore to enter in at the strait gate.' Re. xlii. 18. Mat. xxv. 41. Re. xii. 9. Is. lxx. 13, 14. Mat. xxii. 13. De. xxix. 18—20.

'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

[MOTIVE TO STRIVE TO ENTER INTO THIS KINGDOM.]

Fourth. We are come now to the motive which our Lord urges to enforce his exhortation.

He told us before that the gate was strait; he also exhorted us to strive to enter in thereat, or to get those things now that will further our entrance then, and to set ourselves against those things that will hinder our entering in.

In this motive there are five things to be minded.

1. That there will be a disappointment to some at the day of judgment; they will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

2. That not a few, but many, will meet with this disappointment; 'for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

3. This doctrine of the miscarriage of many then, it standeth upon the validity of the word of Christ; 'For many, I say, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

4. Professors shall make a great heap among

the many that shall fall short of heaven; 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

5. Where grace and striving are wanting now, seeking and contending to enter in will be unprofitable then; 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

But I will proceed in my former method, to wit, to open the words unto you.

[*Import of the words FOR MANY.*]

'For many,' &c. If he had said, For some will fall short, it had been a sentence to be minded; if he had said, For some that seek will fall short, it had been very awakening; but when he saith, Many, many will fall short, yea, many among professors will fall short, this is not only awakening, but dreadful!

[*Various applications of the word MANY.*].—'For many,' &c. I find this word *many* variously applied in Scripture.

1. Sometimes it intendeth the open profane, the wicked and ungodly world, as where Christ saith, 'Wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.' Mat. vii. 13. I say, by the *many* here, *he* intends those chiefly that go on in the broad *way of sin and profaneness*, bearing the 'tokens'

of their damnation in their foreheads, those whose daily practice proclaims that their 'feet go down to death, and their steps take hold on hell.' Job **xxi.**

29, 30. Is. **iii.** 9. Pr. **iv.**

2. Sometimes this word *many* intendeth those that cleave to the people of God deceitfully, and in hypocrisy, or, as Daniel hath it, 'Many shall cleave to them with flatteries.' Da. **xi.** 34. The word *many* in this text includeth all those who feign themselves better than they are in religion; it includeth, I say, those that have religion only for a holiday suit* to set them out at certain times, and when they come among suitable company.

3. Sometimes this word *many* intendeth them that apostatize from Christ; such as for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away; as John saith of some of Christ's disciples: 'From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.' Jn. **vi.** 66.

4. Sometimes this word *many* intendeth them that make a great noise, and do many great things in the church, and yet want saving grace: 'Many,' saith Christ, 'will say unto me in that day, Lord,

* In the edition printed 1692, 'an holiday saint' is used. Saints' days were holidays upon which the gayest dress was put on; but the outward affectation of religion in pious company is better expressed by 'holiday suit,' and I have followed all the modern editors in concluding that the word 'saint' is a typographical error (see p. 62.)—Ed.

Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?' *Mat. vii. 22.* Mark, there will be many of these.

5. Sometimes this word *many* intendeth those poor, ignorant, deluded souls that are led away with every wind of doctrine; those who are caught with the cunning and crafty deceiver, who lieth in wait to beguile unstable souls: 'And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.' *2 Pe. ii. 2.*

6. Sometimes this word *many* includeth all the world, good and bad: 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.' *Da. xii. 2*; compare with *Jn. v. 28, 29.*

7. *Lastly.* Sometimes this word *many* intendeth the good only, even them that shall be saved. *Lu. i. 16*; *ii. 34.*

[*How MANY is applied in the text.*] Since then that the word is so variously applied, let us inquire now it must be taken in the text. And,

1. It must not be applied to the sincerely godly, for they shall never perish. *Jn. x. 27, 28.* 2. It cannot be applied to all the world, for then no flesh should be saved. 3. Neither is it to be applied to the open profane only, for then the hypocrite is by it excluded. 4. But by the *many* in the text *our Lord* intendeth in special the professor; the

professor, I say, how high soever he seems to be now, that shall be found without saving grace in the day of judgment.

Now that the professor is in special intended in this text, consider, so soon as the Lord had said, 'Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,' he pointeth, as with his finger, at the many that then he in special intendeth; to wit, them among whom he had taught; them that had eat and drunken in his presence; them that had prophesied, and cast out devils in his name, and in his name had done many wonderful works. *Lu. xiii. 26. Mat. vii. 22.* These are the many intended by the Lord in this text, though others also are included under the sentence of damnation by his word in other places. 'For many,' &c. Matthew saith, concerning this strait gate, that there are but few that find it. But it seems the cast-aways in my text did *find* it; for you read, that they knocked at it, and cried, 'Lord, open unto us.' So then, the meaning may seem to be this—many of the few that find it will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. I find, at the day of judgment, some will be crying to the rocks to cover them, and some at the gates of heaven for entrance. Suppose that those that cry to the rocks to cover them, are they whose conscience will not suffer them once to look God in the face, because they are fallen under present guilt, and the dreadful fears of the wrath of the

Lamb. re. vi. 16. And that those that stand crying at the gate of heaven, are those whose confidence holds out to the last,—even those whose boldness will enable them to contend even with Jesus Christ for entrance; them, I say, that will have profession, casting out of devils, and many wonderful works, to plead; of this sort are the many in my text: ‘For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.’ Could we compare the professors of the times with the everlasting word of God, this doctrine would more easily appear to the children of men. How few among the many, yea, among the swarms of professors, have heart to make conscience of walking before God in this world, and to study his glory among the children of men! How few, I say, have his name lie nearer their hearts than their own carnal concerns! Nay, do not many make his Word, and his name, and his ways, a stalking-horse to their own worldly advantages? * God calls for faith, good conscience, moderation, self-denial, humility, heavenly-mindedness, love to saints, to enemies, and for conformity in heart, in word, and life, to his will: but where is it? Mar. xi. 22. 1 Pe. iii. 16. He. xiii. 5. Phil. iv. 5. Mat. x. 37—39. Col. iii. 1—4. Mi. vi. 8. Re. ii. 10. Jn. xv. 17. 1 Jn. iv. 21. Mat. v. 44. Pr. xxiii. 26. Col. iv. 6.

* See the character of By-ends and his companions in the ‘*Pilgrim’s Progress*.’

[*Import of the words I SAY UNTO YOU.*]

‘For many, I say unto you.’ These latter words carry in them a double argument to prove the truth asserted before: First, in that he directly pointeth at his followers: ‘I say unto *you* :’ Many, I say unto you, even to you that are my disciples, to you that have eat and drunk in my presence. I know that sometimes Christ hath directed his speech to his disciples, not so much upon their accounts, as upon the accounts of others; but here it is not so; the ‘I say unto you,’ in this place, it immediately concerned some of themselves: I say unto you, *ye* shall begin to stand without, and to knock, ‘saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all *ye* workers of iniquity;’ it is you, *you*, YOU, that I mean! ‘I say unto you.’ It is common with a professing people, when they hear a smart and a thundering sermon, to say, Now has the preacher paid off the drunkard, the swearer, the liar, the covetous, and adulterer; forgetting that these sins may be committed in a spiritual and mystical way. There is spiritual drunkenness, spiritual adultery, and a man may be a liar that calls God his Father when

he is not, or that calls himself a Christian, and is not.* Wherefore, perhaps all these thunders and lightnings in this terrible sermon may more concern thee than thou art aware of: 'I say unto you;' unto you, professors, may be the application of all this thunder. *Re. ii. 9; iii. 9.*

'I say unto you!' Had not the Lord Jesus designed by these words to show what an overthrow will one day be made among professors, he needed not to have *you'd* it at this rate, as in the text, and afterwards, he has done; the sentence had run intelligible enough without it; I say, without his saying, 'I say unto you.' But the truth is, the professor is in danger; the preacher and the hearer, the workers of miracles, and workers of wonders, may all be in danger of damning, notwithstanding all their attainments. And to awaken us all about this truth, therefore, the text must run thus: 'For many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

See you not yet that the professor is in danger, and that those words, 'I say unto you,' are a prophecy of the everlasting perdition of some that are

* O how few professors feel that the judgment of man is as nothing in comparison with that of a heart-searching God. Thousands would tremble at the thought of outwardly committing these great crimes, but who inwardly, in spirit, are daily guilty of them before God. He who is kept by Divine power from spiritual sins, is alone safe from the commission of carnal sins.—ED.

famous in the congregation of saints? I say, if you do not see it, pray God your eyes may be opened, and beware that thy portion be not as the portion of one of those that are wrapped up in the 28th verse of the chapter: 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of heaven, and you *yourselves* thrust out.'

'For many, I say unto you.' These words, I told you, carry in them a double argument for confirmation of the truth asserted before: first, that professors are here particularly pointed at; and, secondly, it is the saying of the Truth himself: for these words, 'I say,' are words full of authority; I say it, I say unto you, says Christ, as he saith in another place, 'It is I that speak; behold it is I!' The person whose words we have now under consideration was no blundering raw-headed preacher,* but the very wisdom of God, his Son, and him that

* It is an awful fact that in every age of the church these 'blundering raw-headed preachers' have abounded. It is a singular appellation to make use of to those who strut in black, and vainly pride themselves upon being descended from the apostles. Alas! how many are those whose hearts and heads are raw indeed as to any influences of vital religion, and whose whole ministry is calculated to mislead the souls of their fellow-sinners as to their eternal hopes. Reader, how solemn is our duty to examine what we have by the unerring Word—to try all things, and hold fast that only which is good.—ED.

hath lain in his bosom from everlasting, and consequently had the most perfect knowledge of his Father's will, and how it would fare with professors at the end of this world. And now hearken what himself doth say of the words which he hath spoken; 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' Mat. xxiv. 35.

'I say unto you.' The prophets used not to speak after this manner, nor yet the holy apostles; for thus to speak, is to press things to be received upon their own authority. They used to say, Thus saith the Lord, or Paul, or Peter, an apostle, or a servant of God. But now we are dealing with the words of the Son of God; it is HE that hath said it; wherefore we find the truth of the perishing of many professors asserted, and confirmed by Christ's own mouth. This consideration carrieth great awakening in it; but into such a fast sleep are many now-a-days fallen, that nothing will awaken them but that shrill and terrible cry, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.'

[*Two things that befall Professors.*] 'I SAY UNTO YOU.' There are two things upon which this assertion may be grounded—1. There is in the world a thing *like* grace, that is not. 2. There is a sin called the sin against the Holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption. And both these things befall professors.



1. *There is in the world a thing like grace, that is not.* (1.) This is evident, because we read that there are some that not only 'make a fair show in the flesh,' that 'glory in appearance,' that 'appear beautiful outward,' that do as God's people, but have not the grace of God's people. Ga. vi. 12. 2 Co. v. 12. Mat. xxiii. 27. Is. lvii. 3, 4. (2.) It is evident also from those frequent cautions that are everywhere in the Scriptures given us about this thing: 'Be not deceived: Let a man examine himself: Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.' Ga. vi. 7. 1 Co. xi. 28. 2 Co. xiii. 5. All these expressions intimate to us that there may be a show of, or a thing like grace, where there is no grace indeed. (3.) This is evident from the conclusion made by the Holy Ghost upon this very thing: 'For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.' Ga. vi. 3. The Holy Ghost here concludeth, that a man may think himself to be something, may think he hath grace, when he hath none; may think himself something for heaven and another world, when indeed he is just nothing at all with reference thereto. The Holy Ghost also determines upon this point, to wit, that they that do so deceive themselves: 'For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself;' he deceiveth his own soul, he deceiveth himself of heaven and salvation. So again: 'Let no man beguile you of your reward.' Col. ii. 18. (4.) It

is manifest from the text; 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Alas! great light, great parts, great works, and great confidence of heaven, may be where there is no faith of God's elect, no love of the Spirit, no repentance unto salvation, no sanctification of the Spirit, and so consequently no saving grace. But,

2. As there is a thing like grace, which is not, so *there is a sin, called the sin against the Holy Ghost*, from which there is no redemption; and this sin doth more than ordinarily befall professors.

There is a sin, called the sin against the Holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption. This is evident both from Matthew and Mark: 'But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.' 'But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.'

Mat. xii. 32. Mar. iii. 29. Wherefore, when we know that a man hath sinned this sin, we are not to pray for him, or to have compassion on him. 1 Jn. v. 16. Jude 22.

This sin doth most ordinarily befall professors; for there are few, if any, that are not professors, that are at present capable of sinning this sin. They which 'were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the

good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,' of this sort are they that commit this sin. He. vi. 4, 5. Peter also describes them to be such, that sin the unpardonable sin. 'For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.' 2 Pe. ii. 20. The other passago in the tenth of Hebrews holdeth forth the same thing. 'For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.' He. x. 26, 27. THESE, therefore, are the persons that are the prey for this sin; this sin feedeth upon PROFESSORS, and they that are such do very often fall into the mouth of this eater. Some fall into the mouth of this sin by delusions and doctrines of devils; and some fall into the mouth of it by returning with the dog to his own vomit again, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. 2 Pe. ii. 22. I shall not here give you a particular description of this sin—that I have done elsewhere;* but such a

* More particularly in the 'Jerusalem Sinner Saved;' see p. 146—'He that *would* be saved by Jesus Christ, through faith in his blood, cannot be counted for such,' &c. The sin against the Holy Ghost is an abandonment of Christianity—

sin there is, and they that commit it shall never have forgiveness. And I say again, there be professors that commit this unpardonable sin, yea, more than most are aware of. Let all, therefore, look about them. The Lord awaken them that they may so do; for what with a profession without grace, and by the venom of the sin against the Holy Ghost, many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

[*Import of the words WILL SEEK TO ENTER IN.*]

‘Will seek to enter in.’ This kingdom, at the gate of which the reprobate will be stopped, will be, at the last judgment, the desire of all the world; and they, especially **THEY** in my text, will seek to enter in; for then they will see that the blessedness is to those that shall get into this kingdom, according to that which is written, ‘Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.’ Re. xxi. 14. To prove that they will seek, although I have done it already, yet read these texts at your leisure—Mat. xxv. 11; vii. 22. Lu. xiii. 28. And, in a word, to give you the reason why they will seek to enter in.

‘to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.’ He. vi. 6. Poor trembler, wouldst thou crucify the Son of God afresh? If thy conscience says, Never! never! thou hast not committed this unpardonable sin.—ED.

[*Why they will seek to enter in.*]

1. Now they will see what a kingdom it is, what glory there is in it, and now they shall also see the blessedness which they shall have that shall then be counted worthy to enter in. The reason why this kingdom is so little regarded, it is because it is not seen; the glory of it is hid from the eyes of the world. 'Their eye hath not seen, nor their ear heard,' &c. Aye, but then they shall hear and see too; and when this comes to pass, then, even then, he that now most seldom thinks thereof will seek to enter in.

2. They will now see what hell is, and what damnation in hell is, more clear than ever. They will also see how the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it. O the sight of the burning fiery furnace, which is prepared for the devil and his angels! This, this will make work in the souls of cast-aways at that day of God Almighty, and then they will *seek* to enter in.

3. Now they will see what the meaning of such words as these are, hell-fire, everlasting fire, devouring fire, fire that never shall be quenched. Now they will see what 'for ever' means, what eternity means; now they will see what this word means, 'the bottomless pit;' now they will hear roaring of sinners in this place, howling in that, some crying to the mountains to fall upon them,

and others to the rocks to cover them; now they will see blessedness is nowhere but within!

4. Now they will see what glory the godly are possessed with; how they rest in Abraham's bosom, how they enjoy eternal glory, how they walk in their white robes, and are equal to the angels. O the favour, and blessedness, and unspeakable happiness that now God's people shall have! and this shall be seen by them that are shut out, by them that God hath rejected for ever; and this will make them seek to enter in. *La. xvi. 22, 23; xiii. 28.*

[*How will they seek to enter in.*]

'Will seek to enter in.' *Quest.* But some may say, How will they seek to enter in? [I] answer,

1. They will put on all the confidence they can, they will trick and trim up their profession, and adorn it with what bravery they can. Thus the foolish virgins sought to enter in; they did trim up their lamps, made themselves as *fine* as they could. They made shift to make their lamps to shine awhile; but the Son of God discovering himself, their confidence failed, their lamps went out, the door was shut upon them, and they were kept out. *Mat. xxv. 1—12.*

2. They will seek to enter in by crowding themselves in among the godly. Thus the man without the wedding garment sought to enter in. *Ile*

goes to the wedding, gets into the wedding chamber, sits close among the guests, and then, without doubt, concluded he should escape damnation. But, you know, one black sheep is soon seen, though it be among a hundred white ones. Why, even thus it fared with this poor man. 'And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man that had not on a wedding garment.' He spied him presently, and before one word was spoken to any of the others, he had this dreadful salutation, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?*' And he was speechless; though he could swagger it out among the guests, yet the master of the feast, at first coming in, strikes him dumb; and having nothing to say for himself, the king had something to say against him. 'Then the king said to the servants,' the angels, 'Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Mat. xxii. 11—13.

3. They will seek to enter in by pleading their profession and admittance to the Lord's ordinances

* The wedding garments being provided by the host, this man must have refused it, and insults his King by sitting among the guests in his ordinary apparel. O reader, before you take a seat at the Lord's table, take prayerful care to be clothed with the robe of righteousness, otherwise you will eat to your utter condemnation, and may, after all, be cast into outer darkness.—Ed.

when they were in the world. 'Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;' we sat at thy table, and used to frequent sermons and Christian assemblies; we were well thought of by thy saints, and were admitted into thy churches; we professed the same faith as they did; 'Lord, Lord, open unto us.'

4. They will seek to enter in by pleading their virtues; how they subjected [themselves] to his ministry, how they wrought for him, what good they did in the world, and the like, but neither will this help them; the same answer that the two former had, the same have these—'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Mat. vii. 22.

5. They will seek to enter in by pleading excuses where they cannot evade conviction. The slothful servant went this way to work, when he was called to account for not improving his Lord's money. 'Lord,' says he, 'I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, and I was afraid,' &c., either that I should not please in laying out thy money, or that I should put it into hands out of which I should not get it again at thy need, 'and I went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine;' as if he had said, True, Lord, I have not improved, I have not got; but consider also I have not embezzled, I have not spent nor lost thy money; lo,

there thou hast what is thine. *Mat. xxv. 24—28.* There are but few will be able to say these last words at the day of judgment. The most of professors are for embezzling, misspending, and slothing away their time, their talents, their opportunities to do good in. But, I say, if he that can make so good an excuse as to say, Lo, there thou hast that is thine; I say, if such an one shall be called a wicked and slothful servant, if such an one shall be put to shame at the day of judgment, yea, if such an one shall, notwithstanding this care to save his Lord's money, be cast as unprofitable into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, what will they do that have neither taken care to lay out, nor care to *keep* what was committed to their trust?

6. They will seek to enter in by pleading that ignorance was the ground of their miscarrying in the things wherein they offended. Wherefore, when Christ charges them with want of love to him, and with want of those fruits that should prove their love to be true—as, that they did not feed him, did not give him drink, did not take him in, did not clothe him, visit him, come unto him, and the like—they readily reply, ‘Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?’ *Mat. xxv. 44.* As who should say, Lord, we are not conscious to ourselves that this charge

is worthily laid at our door! God forbid that we should have been such sinners. But, Lord, give an instance; when was it, or where? True, there was a company of poor sorry people in the world, very inconsiderable, set by with nobody; but for thyself, we professed thee, we loved thee, and hadst thou been with us in the world, wouldst thou have worn gold, wouldst thou have eaten the sweetest of the world, we would have provided it for thee; and therefore, Lord, Lord, open to *us*! But will this plea do? No. Then shall he answer them, 'Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these' my brethren, 'ye did *it* not to me.' This plea, then, though grounded upon ignorance, which is one of the strangest pleas for neglect of duty, would not give them admittance into the kingdom. 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'

I might add *other things by which it will appear how they will seek to enter in.* As,

1. They will make a stop at this gate, this beautiful gate of heaven. They will begin to stand without at the gate, as being loath to go any further. Never did malefactor so unwillingly turn off the ladder when the rope was about his neck, as these will turn away in that day from the gates of heaven to hell.

2. They will not only make a stop at the gate; but there they will knock and call. This also

argueth them willing to enter. They will begin to stand without, and to knock at the gate, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. This word, Lord, being doubled, shows the vehemency of their desires, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us.' The devils are coming; Lord, Lord, the pit opens her mouth upon us; Lord, Lord, there is nothing but hell and damnation left us, if, Lord, Lord, thou hast not mercy upon us; 'Lord, Lord, open unto us!'

3. Their last argument for entrance is their tears, when groundless confidence, pleading of virtues, excuses, and ignorance, will not do; when standing at the gate, knocking, and calling, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us,' will not do, then they betake themselves to their tears. Tears are sometimes the most powerful arguments, but they are nothing worth here. Esau also sought it carefully with tears, but it helped him nothing at all. He. xii. 17. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for the gate is shut for ever, mercy is gone for ever, Christ hath rejected them for ever. All their pleas, excuses, and tears will not make them able to enter into this kingdom. 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

[Import of the words SHALL NOT BE ABLE.]

I come now to the latter part of the words, which closely show us the reason of the rejection of these

many that must be damned; 'They will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

A hypocrite, a false professor, may go a great way; they may pass through the first and second watch; to wit, may be approved of Christians and churches; but what will they do when they come at this *iron gate* that leadeth into the city? . 'There the workers of iniquity are fallen, they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise!' Ps. xxxvi. 12.

'And shall not be able.' The time, as I have already hinted, which my text respecteth, it is the day of judgment, a day when all masks and vizards shall be taken off from all faces. It is a day wherein God 'will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.' 1 Co. iv. 5. It is also the day of his wrath, the day in which he will pay vengeance, even a recompence to his adversaries.

At this day, those things that now these 'many' count sound and good, will then shake like a quagmire, even all their naked knowledge, their feigned faith, pretended love, glorious shows of gravity in the face, their holiday words and specious carriages, will stand them in little stead. I call them holiday ones, for I perceive that some professors do with religion just as people do with their best apparel—hang it against the wall all the week, and put it on on Sundays. For as some scarce ever put on a suit but when they go to a fair or a

market, so little house religion will do with some; they save religion till they go to a meeting, or till they meet with a godly chapman. O poor religion! O poor professor! What wilt thou do at this day, and the day of thy trial and judgment? Cover thyself thou canst not; go for a Christian thou canst not; stand against the Judge thou canst not! What wilt thou do? 'The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.'*

'And shall not be able.' The ability here intended is not that which standeth in carnal power or fleshly subtlety, but in the truth and simplicity of those things for the sake of which God giveth the kingdom of heaven to his people.

There are *five things, for the want of which this people will not be able to enter.*

1. This kingdom belongs to the elect, to those

* May these searching words make an indelible impression upon the heart of every reader. How striking, and alas! how true, is this delineation of character. Religious when in company with professors—profane when with the world; pretending to be a Christian on a Sunday; striving to climb with Christian the Hill Difficulty—every other day running down the hill with Timorous and Mistrust. Such may get to the bottom of the hill, and hide themselves in the world; but they can never lie concealed from God's anger, either in this world, or in the bottomless pit, whither they are hurrying to destruction.

'Sinner, O why so thoughtless grown?
Why in such dreadful haste to die?'—Ed.

for whom it was prepared from the foundation of the world. Mat. xxv. 34. Hence Christ saith, when he comes, he will send forth his angels with a great sound of trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another. Mat. xxiv. 31. And hence he saith again, 'I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains, and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.' 'They shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.' 'But the election liath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.' Ro. xi. 7.

2. They will not be able to enter, because they will want the birthright. The kingdom of heaven is for the heirs—and if children, then heirs; if born again, then heirs. Wherefore it is said expressly, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' By this one word, down goes all carnal privilege of being born of flesh and blood, and of the will of man. Canst thou produce the birthright? But art thou sure thou canst? For it will little profit thee to think of the blessed kingdom of heaven, if thou wantest a birthright to give thee inheritance there. Esau did despise his birthright, saying, What good will this birthright do me? And there are many in the world of his mind to this day. 'Tush,' say they, 'they talk of being born again; what good shall a man get by that?' They say, no going to heaven without being

born again. But God is merciful; Christ died for sinners; and we will turn when we can tend it,* and doubt not but all will be well at last.' But I will answer thee, thou child of Esau, that the birthright and blessing go together; miss of one, and thou shalt never have the other! Esau found this true; for, having first despised the birthright, when he would afterwards 'have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.' Ge. xxv. He. xii. 16, 17.

3. They shall not be able to enter in who have not believed with the faith of God's operation; the faith that is most holy, even the faith of God's elect. 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Jn. iii. 36. But now this faith is the effect of electing love, and of a new birth. Jn. i. 11—13. Therefore, all the professors that have not faith which floweth from being born of God, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

4. They shall not be able to enter in that have not gospel-holiness. Holiness that is the effect of faith is that which admits into the presence of God,

* 'Tend it,' or attend to it. What madness does sin engender and foster! The trifles of time entirely occupy the attention, while the momentous affairs of eternity are put off to a more convenient opportunity.—Ed.

and into his kingdom too. 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death,' that is, hell and eternal damnation, 'hath no power.' Re. xx. 6, 14. Blessed and holy, with the holiness that flows from faith which is in Christ; for to these the inheritance belongs. 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith,' saith Christ, 'that is in me.' Ac. xxvi. 18. This holiness, which is the natural effect of faith in the Son of God, Christ Jesus the Lord will, at this day of judgment, distinguish from all other shows of holiness and sanctity, be they what they will, and will admit the soul that hath this holiness into his kingdom, when the rest will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

5. They shall not be able to enter in that do not persevere in this blessed faith and holiness; not that they that have them indeed can finally fall away, and everlastingly perish; but it hath pleased Jesus Christ to bid them that have the right to hold fast that they have: to endure to the end; and then tells them they shall be saved—though it is as true that none is of power to keep himself; but God worketh together with his children, and they are 'kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation,' which is also laid up in heaven for them. 1 Pe. i. 3—5.

'The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou

hatest all workers of iniquity.' Ps. v. 5. The foolish are the unholy ones, that neither have faith, nor holiness, nor perseverance in godliness, and yet lay claim to the kingdom of heaven; but 'better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.' Pr. xvi. 8. What is it for me to claim a house, or a farm, without right? or to say, all this is mine, but have nothing to show for it? This is but like the revenues of the foolish; his estate lieth in his conceit. He hath nothing by birthright and law, and therefore shall not be able to inherit the possession. 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

Thus you see, that the non-elect shall not be able to enter, that he that is not born again shall not be able to enter, that he that hath not saving faith, with holiness and perseverance flowing therefrom, shall not be able to enter; wherefore consider of what I have said.

[SECOND. THE WORDS BY WAY OF OBSERVATION.]

I come now to give you some observations from the words, and they may be three.

FIRST. When men have put in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance. 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' SECOND. Great.

therefore, will be the disappointment that many will meet with at the day of judgment: 'For many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' **THIRD.** Going to heaven, therefore, will be no trivial business; salvation is not got by a dream; they that would then have that kingdom must now strive lawfully to enter: 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

FIRST. I shall speak chiefly, and yet but briefly, to the first of these observations; to wit, That when men have put in all the claim they can to the kingdom of heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance. The observation standeth of two parts. *First.* That the time is coming, when every man will put in whatever claim they can to the kingdom of heaven. *Second.* There will be but few of them that put in claim thereto, that shall enjoy it for their inheritance.

[*First.* ALL WILL PUT IN WHAT CLAIM THEY CAN TO
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.]

I shall speak but a word or two to the first part of the observation, because I have prevented my enlargement thereon by my explication upon the words; but you find in the twenty-fifth of Matthew, that all they on the left hand of the Judge did put in all the claim they could for this *blessed* kingdom of heaven. If you should take

them on the left hand as most do, for all the sinners that shall be damned, then that completely proveth the first part of the observation; for it is expressly said, 'Then shall they,' all of them jointly, and every one apart, 'also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thus and thus, and did not minister unto thee?' Mat. xxv. 44. I could here bring you in the plea of the slothful servant, the cry of the foolish virgins; I could also here enlarge upon that passage, 'Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets?' But these things are handled already in the handling of which this first part of the observation is proved; wherefore, without more words, I will, God assisting by his grace, descend to the second part thereof, to wit,

Second. THERE WILL BE BUT FEW OF THEM THAT PUT IN CLAIM THERETO THAT WILL ENJOY IT FOR THEIR INHERITANCE.

I shall speak distinctly to this part of the observation, and shall first confirm it by a scripture or two. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' Mat. vii. 14. 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' Lu. xii. 32. By these two texts, and by many more

that will be urged anon, you may see the truth of what I have said.

To enlarge, therefore, upon the truth ; and, *First*, more *generally* ; *Second*, more *particularly*. More generally, I shall prove that in all ages but few have been saved. More particularly, I shall prove but few of them that profess have been saved.

[*First, Generally—in all ages but few have been saved.*]

1. In the old world, when it was most populous, even in the days of Noah, we read but of eight persons that were saved out of it ; well, therefore, might Peter call them but few ; but how few ? why, but eight souls ; ‘ wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.’ 1 Pe. iii. 20. He touches a second time upon this truth, saying, He ‘ spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.’ 2 Pe. ii. 5. Mark, all the rest are called the ungodly, and there were also a world of them. These are also taken notice of in Job, and go there also by the name of wicked men : ‘ Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden ? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood, which said unto God, Depart from us, and what can the Almighty do for them ? ’ Job xxii. 15—17.

There were therefore but eight persons that escaped the wrath of God, in the day that the flood came upon the earth ; the rest were ungodly ; there was also a world of them, and they are to this day in the prison of hell. He. xi. 7. 1 Pe. iii. 19, 20. Nay, I must correct my pen, there were but seven of the eight that were good ; for Ham, though he escaped the judgment of the water, yet the curse of God overtook him to his damnation.

2. When the world began again to be replenished, and people began to multiply therein : how few, even in all ages, do we read of that were saved from the damnation of the world !

(1.) One Abraham and his wife, God called out of the land of the Chaldeans ; ‘ I called,’ said God, ‘ Abraham alone.’ Is. li. 2.

(2.) One Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrah, out of Admah and Zeboim ; one Lot out of four cities ! Indeed his wife and two daughters went out of Sodom with him ; but they all three proved naught, as you may see in the nineteenth of Genesis. Wherefore Peter observes, that Lot only was saved : ‘ He turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemning them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly, and delivered just Lot, that righteous man.’ Read 2 Pe. ii. 6—8. Jude says, that in this condemnation God overthrew not only Sodom and Gomorrah, but the cities about them also ; and yet

you find none but Lot could be found that was righteous, either in Sodom or Gomorrah, or the cities about them; wherefore they, all of them, suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. *ver. 7.*

(3.) Come we now to the time of the Judges, how few then were godly, even then when the inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel! 'the highways' of God 'were' then 'unoccupied.' *Ju. v. 6, 7.*

(4.) There were but few in the days of David: 'Help, Lord,' says he, 'for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men.' *Ps. xii. 1.*

(5.) In Isaiah's time the saved were come to such a few, that he positively says that there were a very small number left: 'God had made them like Sodom, and they had been like unto Gomorrah.' *Is. i. 8, 9.*

(6.) It was cried unto them in the time of Jeremiah, that they should 'run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.' *Je. v. 1.*

(7.) God showed his servant Ezekiel how few there would be saved in his day, by the vision of a few hairs saved out of the midst of a few hairs; for the saved were a few saved out of a few. *Eze. v. 5.*

(8.) You find in the time of the prophet Mical, how the godly complain, that as to number they then were so few, that he compares them to those that are left behind when they had gathered the summer-fruit. *Mi. vii. 1.*

(9.) When Christ was come, how did he confirm this truth, that but few of them that put in claim for heaven will have it for their inheritance! But the common people could not hear it, and therefore, upon a time when he did but a little hint at this truth, the people, even all in the synagogue where he preached it, 'were filled with wrath, rose up, thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill,' whereon their city was built, 'that they might cast him down headlong.'

Ln. iv. 24—29.

(10.) John, who was after Christ, saith, 'The whole world lieth in wickedness; that all the world wondered after the beast; and that power was given to the beast over all kindreds, tongues, and nations.' Power to do what? Why, to cause all, both great and small, rich and poor, bond and free, to receive his mark, and to be branded for him.

1 Jn. v. 10. Re. xiii. 3, 7, 16.

(11.) Should we come to observation and experience, the show of the countenance of the bulk of men doth witness against them; 'they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.' *Is. iiii. 9.* Where is the man that maketh the Almighty God his de-

light, and that designeth his glory in the world? Do not even almost all pursue this world, their lusts and pleasures? and so, consequently, say unto God, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; or, What is the Almighty that we should serve him? It is in vain to serve God,' &c.

So that without doubt it will appear a truth in the day of God, that but few of them that shall put in their claim to heaven will have it for their inheritance.

Before I pass this head, I will show you to what the saved are compared in the Scriptures.

[To what the saved are compared in Scripture.]

1. They are compared to a handful: 'There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains,' &c. Ps. lxxii. 16. This corn is nothing else but them that shall be saved. Mat. iii. 12; xiii. 30. But mark, 'There shall be an handful:' What is a handful, when compared with the whole heap? or, what is a handful out of the rest of the world?

2. As they are compared to a handful, so they are compared to a lily among the thorns, which is rare, and not so commonly seen: 'As the lily among thorns,' saith Christ, 'so is my love among the daughters.' Ca. ii. 2. By thorns, we understand *the worst* and best of men, even all that are desti-

tute of the grace of God, for 'the best of them is a brier, the most upright' of them 'as a thorn-hedge.' *Mi. vii. 4. 2 Sa. xxiii. 6.* I know that she may be called a lily amongst thorns also, because she meets with the pricks of persecution. *Eze. ii. 6; xxviii. 24.* She may also be thus termed, to show the disparity that is betwixt hypocrites and the church. *Lu. viii. 14. Ilc. viii.* But this is not all; the saved are compared to a lily among thorns, to show you that they are but few in the world; to show you that they are but few and rare; for as Christ compares her to a lily among thorns, so she compares him to an apple-tree among the trees of the wood, which is rare and scarce; not common.

3. They that are saved are called but one of many; for though there be 'threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number,' yet my love, saith Christ, is but one, my undefiled is but one. *Ca. vi. 8, 9.* According to that of Jeremiah, 'I will take you one of a city.' *Je. iii. 14.* That saying of Paul is much like this, 'Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize.' *1 Co. ix. 24.* But one, that is, few of many, few of them that run; for he is not here comparing them that run with them that sit still, but with them that run, some run and lose, some run and win; they that run and win are few in comparison with them that run and lose: 'They that run in a race run all, but one receives the

prize; 'let there then be 'threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number,' yet the saved are but few.

4. They that are saved are compared to the gleaning after the vintage is in: 'Woe is me,' said the church, 'for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings' after the vintage is in. *Mi. vii. 1.* The gleanings! What are the gleanings to the whole crop? and yet you here see, to the gleanings are the saved compared. It is the devil and sin that carry away the cart-loads, while Christ and his ministers come after a gleaning. But the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer. *Ju. viii. 2.* Them that Christ and his ministers glean up and bind up in the bundle of life, are better than the loads that go the other way. You know it is often the cry of the poor in harvest, Poor gleaning, poor gleaning. And the ministers of the gospel they also cry, Lord, 'who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' *Is. liii. 1.* When the prophet speaks of the saved under this metaphor of gleaning, how doth he amplify the matter? 'Gleaning-grapes shall be left,' says he, 'two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord.' *Is. xlvii. 6.* Thus you see what gleaning is left in the vineyard, *after the vintage is in; two or three here, four or*

five there. Alas! they that shall be saved when the devil and hell have had their due, they will be but as the gleanings, they will be but few; they that go to hell, go thither in clusters, but the saved go not so to heaven. Mat. xiii. 30. Mi. vii. Wherefore when the prophet speaketh of the saved, he saith there is no cluster; but when he speaketh of the damned, he saith they are gathered by clusters. Re. xiv. 18, 19. O sinners! but few will be saved! O professors! but few will be saved!

5. They that shall be saved are compared to jewels: 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.' Mal. iii. 17. Jewels, you know, are rare things, things that are not found in every house. Jewels will lie in little room, being few and small, though lumber takes up much. In almost every house, you may find brass, and iron, and lead; and in every place you may find hypocritical professors, but the saved are not these common things; they are God's peculiar treasure. Ps. cxxxv. 4. Wherefore Paul distinguisheth betwixt the lumber and the treasure in the house. There is, saith he, in a great house, not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 2 Ti. ii. 20. Here is a word for wooden and earthy professors; the jewels and treasures are vessels to honour, they of wood and earth are vessels of dishonour, that is, vessels for destruction. Ro. ix. 21.

6. They that shall be saved are compared to a remnant: 'Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.' Is. i. 9. A remnant, a small remnant, a very small remnant! O how doth the Holy Ghost word it! and all to show you how few shall be saved. Every one knows what a remnant is, but this is a small remnant, a very small remnant. So again, 'Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.' Je. xxxi. 7. What shall I say? the saved are often in Scripture called a remnant. Eze. ix. 4, 8. Is. x. 20—22; xi. 11, 16. Je. xxiii. 3. Joel ii. 32. But what is a remnant to the whole piece? What is a remnant of people to the whole kingdom? or what is a remnant of wheat to the whole harvest?

7. The saved are compared to the tithe or tenth part; wherefore when God sendeth the prophet to make the hearts of the people fat, their ears dull, and to shut their eyes, the prophet asketh, 'How long?' to which God answereth, 'Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet,' as God saith in another place, 'I will not make a *full end*,' 'in it shall be a tenth, - so the holy seed

shall be the substance thereof.' Is. vi. 10—13. But what is a tenth? What is one in ten? And yet so speaks the Holy Ghost, when he speaks of the holy seed, of those that were to be reserved from the judgment. And observe it, the fattening and blinding of the rest, it was to their everlasting destruction; and so both Christ and Paul expounds it often in the New Testament. Mat. xiii. 14, 15. Mar. iv. 12. Lu. viii. 10. Jn. xii. 40. Ac. xxviii. 26. Ro. xi. 8. So that those that are reserved from them that perish will be very few, one in ten: 'A tenth shall return, so the holy seed *shall be the substance thereof.*'*

I shall not add more generals at this time. I pray God that the world be not offended at these. But without doubt, but few of them that shall put in their claim for heaven will have it for their inheritance; which will yet further appear in the reading of that which follows.

[*Second. Particularly—but few of them that profess have been saved.*]

Therefore I come more particularly to show you that but few shall be saved. I say, but few of pro-

* Lowth's translation of this passage in Is. vi. 13 not only confirms Bunyan, but exhibits his view in a more prominent light:—'And though there be a tenth part remaining in it, even this shall undergo a repeated destruction; yet as the ilex and the oak, though cut down, hath its stock remaining, a holy seed shall be the stock of the nation.'—ED.

fessors themselves will be saved; for that is the truth that the text doth more directly look at and defend. Give me, therefore, thy hand, good reader, and let us soberly walk through the rest of what shall be said; and let us compare as we go each particular with the holy Scripture.

1. It is said, 'The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.' *Is. i. 8.* The vineyard was the church of Israel, the cottage in that vineyard was the daughter of Zion, or the truly gracious amongst, or in that church. *Is. v. 1.* A cottage; God had but a cottage there, but a little habitation in the church, a very few that were truly gracious amongst that great multitude that professed; and had it not been for these, for this cottage, the rest had been ruined as Sodom; 'Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us,' in the church, a very few, they had been as Sodom. *Is. i. 9.* Wherefore, among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party.

2. 'For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them shall return,' 'a remnant shall be saved.' *Is. x. 22. Ro. ix. 27.* For though thy people Israel, whom thou broughtest out of Egypt, to whom thou hast given church-constitution, holy laws, holy ordinances, holy prophets, and holy covenants; thy people by separation from *all* people, and thy people by profession; though

this thy people be as the sand of the sea, 'a remnant shall be saved;' wherefore, among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party.

3. 'Reprobate silver shall *men* call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.' Je. vi. 30. The people here under consideration are called, in ver. 27, 'God's people, his people by profession: 'I have set thee *for* a tower *and* a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know, and try their way.' What follows? They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders, reprobate silver; the Lord hath rejected them. In chap. vii. 29, they are called also the generation of his wrath: 'For the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.' This, therefore, I gather out of these holy scriptures,—that with reference to profession and church-constitution, a people may be called the people of God; but, with reference to the event and final conclusion that God will make with some of them, they may be truly the generation of his wrath.

4. In the fifth of Isaiah, you read again of the vineyard of God, and that it was planted on a very fruitful hill, planted with the choicest vines, had a wall, a tower, a wine-press belonging to it, and all things that could put it into right order and good government, as a church; but this vineyard of the Lord of hosts brought forth wild grapes, fruits un-

becoming her constitution and government, wherefore the Lord takes from her his hedge and wall, and lets her be trodden down. Read Christ's exposition upon it in Mat. xxi. 33, &c. Look to it, professors, these are the words of the text, 'For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

5. 'Son of man,' said God to the prophet, 'the house of Israel is to me become dross, all they are brass and tin, and iron and lead, in the midst of the furnace they *even* are the dross of silver.' Eze. xxii. 18. God had silver there, some silver, but it was but little; the bulk of that people was but the dross of the church, though they were the members of it. But what doth he mean by the dross? why, he looked upon them as no better, notwithstanding their church-membership, than the rabble of the world, that is, with respect to their latter end; for to be called dross, it is to be put amongst the rest of the sinners of the world, in the judgment of God, though at present they abide in his house: 'Thou putteth away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross; therefore I love thy testimonies.' Ps. cxix. 119.

God saith of his saved ones, 'He hath chosen them in the furnace of affliction.' The refiner, when he putteth his silver into his furnace, he puts lead in also among it; now this lead being ordered as he knows how, works up the dross from the silver, *which* dross, still as it riseth, he putteth by, or

taketh away with an instrument. And thus deals God with his church; there is silver in his church, aye, and there is also dross: now the dross are the hypocrites and graceless ones that are got into the church, and these will God discover, and afterwards put away as dross. So that it will without doubt prove a truth of God, that many of their professors that shall put in claim for heaven, will not have it for their inheritance.

6. It is said of Christ, his 'fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' Mat. iii. 12. The floor is the church of God: 'O my threshing, and the corn of my floor!' said God by the prophet, to his people. Is. xxi. 10. The wheat are these good ones in his church that shall be undoubtedly saved; therefore he saith, 'Gather my wheat into my garner.' The chaff groweth upon the same stalk and ear, and so is in the same visible body with the wheat, but there is not substance in it: wherefore in time they must be severed one from the other; the wheat must be gathered into the garner, which is heaven; and the chaff, or professors that want true grace, must be gathered into hell, that they may be burned up with unquenchable fire. Therefore let professors look to it!*

* How solemn the thought—there is but little wheat in

7. Christ Jesus casts away two of the three grounds that are said to receive the word. *La. viii.*

The stony ground received it with joy, and the thorny ground brought forth fruit almost to perfection. Indeed the highway ground was to show us that the carnal, whilst such, receive not the word at all; but here is the pinch, two of the three that received it, fell short of the kingdom of heaven; for but one of the three received it so as to bring forth fruit to perfection. Look to it, professors!

8. The parable of the unprofitable servant, the parable of the man without a wedding garment, and the parable of the unsavoury salt, do each of them justify this for truth. *Mat. xxv. 24, 29; xxii. 11—13:*

v. 13. That of the unprofitable servant is to show us the sloth and idleness of some professors; that of the man without a wedding garment is to show us how some professors have the shame of their wickedness seen by God, even when they are among the children of the bridegroom; and that parable of the unsavoury salt is to show, that as the salt that hath lost its savour is fit for nothing, no, not for the dunghill, but to be trodden under foot of men; so some professors, yea, and great ones too, for this parable reached one of the apostles, will

comparison with all the grass and vegetable produce of the earth; and in the harvest how much chaff and straw, which grew with the wheat, will be cast out! Well may it be said, *Look to it, professors.*—*ED.*

in God's day be counted fit for nothing but to be trodden down as the mire in the streets. O the slothful, the naked, and unsavoury professors, how will they be rejected of God and his Christ in the judgment! Look to it, professors!

9. The parable of the tares also giveth countenance to this truth: for though it be said the field is the world, yet it is said, the tares were sown even in the church. 'And while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.' Mat. xiii. 24, 25. *Object.* But some may object, The tares might be sown in the world among the wheat, though not in the churches. *Answ.* But Christ, by expounding this parable, tells us the tares were sown in his kingdom; the tares, that is, the children of the devil. 'As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' ver. 30, 39—43. Look to it, professors!

10. The parable of the ten virgins also suiteth our purpose; these ten are called the kingdom of heaven, that is, the church of Christ, the visible rightly-constituted church of Christ; for they went all out of the world, had all lamps, and all went forth to meet the bridegroom; yet behold what an

overthrow the one-half of them met with at the gate of heaven; they were shut out, bid to depart, and Christ told them he did not know them. *Mat. xxv. 1—13.* Tremble, professors! Pray, professors!

11. The parable of the net that was cast into the sea, that also countenanceth this truth. The substance of that parable is to show that souls may be gathered by the gospel—there compared to a net—may be kept in that net, drawn to shore, to the world's end, by that net, and yet may then prove bad fishes, and be cast away. The parable runs thus:—‘The kingdom of heaven,’ the gospel, ‘is like unto a net which was cast into the sea,’ the world, ‘and gathered of every kind,’ good and bad, ‘which when it was full, they drew to shore,’ to the end of the world, ‘and sat down,’ in judgment, ‘and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.’ Some bad fishes, nay, I doubt a great many, will be found in the net of the gospel, at the day of judgment. *Mat. xiii. 47, 49.* Watch and be sober, professors!

12. ‘And - many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.’ *Mat. viii. 11, 12.* The children of the kingdom, whose privileges were said to be these, ‘to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service

of God, and the promises.' Ro. ix. 4. I take liberty to *harp* the more upon the first church, because that that happened to them, happened as types and examples, intimating, there is ground to think, that things of as dreadful a nature are to happen among the church of the Gentiles. 1 Co. x. 11, 12. Neither, indeed, have the Gentile churches security from God that there shall not as dreadful things happen to them. And concerning this very thing, sufficient caution is given to us also. 1 Co. vi. 9, 10. Ga. v. 19—21. Ep. v. 3—6. Phi. iii. 17, 19. 2 Th. ii. 11, 12. 2 Ti. ii. 20, 21. 11c. vi. 4—8; x. 26—28. 2 Pe. ii.; iii. 1 Jn. v. 10. Re. ii. 20—22.

13. The parable of the true vine and its branches confirm what I have said. By the vine there I understand Christ, Christ as head; by the branches, I understand his church. Some of these branches proved fruitless cast-aways, were in time cast out of the church, were gathered by men, and burned. Jn. xv. 1—6.

14. Lastly, I will come to particular instances.

(1.) The twelve had a devil among them. Jn. vi. 70. (2.) Ananias and Sapphira were in the church of Jerusalem. Ac. v. (3.) Simon Magus was among them at Samaria. Ac. viii. (4.) Among the church of Corinth were them that had not the knowledge of God. 1 Co. xv. 34. (5.) Paul tells the Galatians that false brethren crept in unawares; and so does the apostle Jude, and yet they were as quick-sighted to see as any now-a-days. Ga. ii. 4. Jude 4. (6.) The

church in Sardis had but a few names in her, to whom the kingdom of heaven belonged. 'Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' *Re. iii. 4.* (7.) As for the church of the Laodiceans, it is called 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' *Re. iii. 17.* So that put all things together, and I may boldly say, as I also have said already, that among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party; or, to speak in the words of the observation, 'when men have put in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance.'

[REASONS WHY FEW ARE SAVED.]

I will now show you some reasons of the point, besides those five that I showed you before. [See pp. 63-67.] And, *First*, I will show you why the poor, carnal, ignorant world miss of heaven; and then, *Second*, why the knowing professors miss of it also.

[*First, Why the poor, carnal, ignorant world miss of heaven.*]

1. The poor, carnal, ignorant world miss of heaven even because they love their sins, and cannot part with them. 'Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' *Jn. iii. 19.*

The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they are enemies in their minds to God, his Word, and holiness; they must be all damned who take pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Th. ii. 10—12. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they stop their ears against convictions, and refuse to come when God calls. 'Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh - as desolation, and your destruction - as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.' Pr. i. 24—29.

2. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because the god of this world hath blinded their eyes, that they can neither see the evil and damnable state they are in at present, nor the way to get out of it; neither do they see the beauty of Jesus Christ, nor how willing he is to save poor sinners.

2 Co. iv. 2, 3.

3. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they put off and defer coming to Christ, until the time of God's patience and grace is over. Some, indeed, are resolved never to come; but some, again, say, We will come hereafter; and so it comes to pass, that because God called, and they

did not hear ; so they shall cry, and I will not hear, saith the Lord. Z.c. vii. 11—13.

4. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they have false apprehensions of God's mercy. They say in their hearts, We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. But what saith the Word ? ' The Lord will not spare him ; but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' De. xxix. 19—21.

5. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they make light of the gospel that offereth mercy to them freely, and because they lean upon their own good meanings, and thinkings, and doings. Mat. xxii. 1—5. Ro. ix. 30, 31.

6. The poor carnal world miss of heaven because by unbelief, which reigns in them, they are kept for ever from being clothed with Christ's righteousness, and from washing in his blood, without which there is neither remission of sin, nor justification. But to pass these till anon.

[*Second.*] I come, in the next place, to show you *some reasons why the professor falls short of heaven.*

First. In the general, they rest in things below *special grace* ; as in awakenings that are not

special, in faith* that is not special, &c.; and, a little to run a parallel betwixt the one and the other, that, if God will, you may see and escape.

1. Have they that shall be saved, awakenings about their state by nature? So have they that shall be damned. They that never go to heaven may see much of sin, and of the wrath of God due thereto. This had Cain and Judas, and yet they came short of the kingdom. Ge. iv. Mat. xxvii. 4. The saved have convictions, in order to their eternal life; but the others' convictions are not so. The convictions of the one doth drive them sincerely to Christ; the convictions of the other doth drive them to the law, and the law to desperation at last.

2. There is a repentance that will not save, a repentance to be repented of; and a repentance to salvation, not to be repented of. 2 Co. vii. 10. Yet so great a similitude and likeness there is betwixt the one and the other, that most times the wrong is taken for the right, and through this mistake professors perish. As, (1.) In saving repentance there will be an acknowledgment of sin; and one that hath the other repentance may acknowledge his sins also. Mat. xxvii. 4. (2.) In saving repentance there is a crying out under sin; but one that hath the

* The word 'faith' was changed in 1787 for 'repentance,' which has been continued in subsequent editions; 'faith' is right. Awakenings and repentance are classed together under the first head, and faith under the second.—ED.

other repentance may cry out under sin also. Ge. iv. 13. (3.) In **saving** repentance there will be humiliation for sin; and one that hath the other repentance may humble himself also. 1 Ki. xxi. 29. (4.) **Saving** repentance is attended with self-loathing; but he that hath the other repentance may have loathing of sin too; a loathing of sin, because it is sin, that he cannot have; but a loathing of sin, because it is offensive to him, that he may have. The dog doth not loath that which troubleth his stomach because it is there, but because it troubleth him; when it has done troubling of him, he can turn to it again, and lick it up as before it troubled him. 2 Pe. ii. 23. (5.) **Saving** repentance is attended with prayers and tears; but he that hath none but the other repentance, may have prayers and tears also. Ge. xxvii. 34, 35. Ho. xii. 16, 17. (6.) In **saving** repentance there is fear and reverence of the Word and ministers that bring it; but this may be also where there is none but the repentance that is not saving; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy, and observed him; when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. Mar. vi. 20. (7.) **Saving** repentance makes a man's heart very tender of doing anything against the Word of God. But Balaam could say, 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord.' Nu. xxiv. 13.

Behold, then, how far a man may go in repentance, and yet be short of that which is called, 'Repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.' (a) He may be awakened; (b) He may acknowledge his sin; (c) He may cry out under the burden of sin; (d) He may have humility for it; (e) He may loath it; (f) May have prayers and tears against it; (g) May delight to do many things of God; (h) May be afraid of sinning against him—and, after all this, may perish, for want of saving repentance.

Second. Have they that shall be saved, faith? Why, they that shall not be saved may have faith also; yea, a faith in many things so like the faith that saveth, that they can hardly be distinguished, though they differ both in root and branch. To come to particulars.

1. Saving faith hath Christ for its object, and so may the faith have that is not saving. Those very Jews of whom it is said they believed on Christ, Christ tells them, and that after their believing, 'Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.' Jn. viii. 30—44. 2. Saving faith is wrought by the Word of God, and so may the faith be that is not saving. Lu. viii. 13. 3. Saving faith looks for justification without works, and so may a faith do that is not saving. Ja. ii. 18. 4. Saving faith will sanctify and purify the heart, and the faith that is not saving may work a man

off from the pollutions of the world, as it did Judas, Demas, and others. 2 Pe. ii. 5. Saving faith will give a man tastes of the world to come, and also joy by those tastes, and so will the faith do that is not saving. He. vi. 4, 5. Lu. viii. 13. 6. Saving faith will help a man, if called thereto, to give his body to be burned for his religion, and so will the faith do that is not saving. 1 Co. xiii. 1—5. 7. Saving faith will help a man to look for an inheritance in the world to come, and that may the faith do that is not saving. All those virgins ‘took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.’ Mat. xxv. 1. 8. Saving faith will not only make a man look for, but prepare to meet the bridegroom, and so may the faith do that is not saving. ‘Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.’ Mat. xxv. 7. 9. Saving faith will make a man look for an interest in the kingdom of heaven with confidence, and the faith that is not saving will even demand entrance of the Lord. ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ Mat. xxv. 11. 10. Saving faith will have good works follow it into heaven, and the faith that is not saving may have great works follow it, as far as to heaven gates. ‘Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ Mat. vii. 22.

Now, then, if the faith that is not saving may have Christ for its object, be wrought by the Word,

look for justification without works, work men off from the pollutions of the world, and give men tastes of, and joy in the things of another world—I say again, if it will help a man to burn for his judgment, and to look for an inheritance in another world; yea, if it will help a man to prepare for it, claim interest in it; and if it can carry great works, many great and glorious works, as far as heaven gates, then no marvel if abundance of people take this faith for the saving faith, and so fall short of heaven thereby. Alas, friends! There are but few that can produce such [works] for repentance; and such faith, as yet you see I have proved even reprobates have had in several ages of the church.* But,

Third. They that go to heaven are a praying people; but a man may pray that shall not be saved. Pray! He may pray, pray daily; yea, he may ask of God the ordinances of justice, and may take delight in approaching to God; nay, further, such souls may, as it were, cover the altar of the

* Many readers will cry out, Who then can be saved? Without charity, or the love of Christ in the heart, all faith and works are but dross. Love is the touchstone of faith and works—not to glorify ourselves, but him who has bought us with his own most precious blood. Carry the solemn inquiry to the throne of grace, Have I passed from death unto life? for whosoever thus liveth believeth in Christ, and, amidst the fatal wreck of professors, he shall never die.—Ed.

Lord with tears, with weeping and crying out.

La. xxviii. 2. Mal. ii. 13.

Fourth. Do God's people keep holy fasts? They that are not his people may keep fasts also—may keep fasts often—even twice a week. 'The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' La. xviii. 11, 12. I might enlarge upon things, but I intend but a little book. I do not question but many Balaamites will appear before the judgment-seat to condemnation; men that have had visions of God, and that knew the knowledge of the Most High; men that have had the Spirit of God come upon them, and that have by that been made other men; yet these shall go to the generations of their fathers, they shall never see light.

Nu. xxiv. 2, 4, 16. 1 Sa. x. 6, 10. Ps. xlix. 19.

I read of some men whose excellency in religion mounts up to the heavens, and their heads reach unto the clouds, who yet shall perish for ever like their own dung; and he that in this world hath seen them, shall say at the judgment, Where are they? Job xx. 5—7. There will be many a one, that were gallant professors in this world, be wanting among the saved in the day of Christ's coming; yea, many whose damnation was never dreamed

of. Which of the twelve ever thought that Judas would have proved a devil? Nay, when Christ suggested that one among them was naught, they each were more afraid of themselves than of him. *Mat. xxvi. 21—23.* Who questioned the salvation of the foolish virgins? The wise ones did not; they gave them the privilege of communion with themselves. *Mat. xxv.* The discerning of the heart, and the infallible proof of the truth of saving grace, is reserved to the judgment of Jesus Christ at his coming. The church and best of saints sometimes hit, and sometimes miss in their judgments about this matter; and the cause of our missing in our judgment is, 1. Partly because we cannot infallibly, at all times, distinguish grace that saveth from that which doth but appear to do so. 2. Partly also because some men have the art to give right names to wrong things. 3. And partly because we, being commanded to receive him that is weak, are afraid to exclude the least Christian. By a hid means hypocrites creep into the churches. But what saith the Scripture? ‘I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.’ And again, ‘All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.’ *Je. xi. 20; xvi. 10. Re. ii. 23.* To this Searcher of hearts is the time of infallible discerning reserved, and then you shall see how far grace that is not saving hath gone,

and also how few will be saved indeed. The Lord awaken poor sinners by my little book.

[USE AND APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE.]

I come now to make some brief use and application of the whole; and

[USE FIRST.]—My first word shall be *to the open profane*. Poor sinner, thou readest here that but a few will be saved; that many that expect heaven will go without heaven. What sayest thou to this, poor sinner? Let me say it over again. There are but few to be saved, but very few. Let me add, but few professors—but few eminent professors. What sayest thou now, sinner? If judgment begins at the house of God, what will the end of them be that obey not the gospel of God? This is Peter's question. Canst thou answer it, sinner? Yea, I say again, if judgment must begin at them, will it not make thee think, What shall become of me? And I add, when thou shalt see the stars of heaven to tumble down to hell, canst thou think that such a muck-heap of sin as thou art shall be lifted up to heaven? Peter asks thee another question, to wit, 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' 1 Pe. iv. 18. Canst thou answer this question, sinner? Stand among the righteous thou mayest not: 'The ungodly shall not stand in the

judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' Ps. i. 5. Stand among the wicked thou then wilt not dare to do. Where wilt thou appear, sinner? To stand among the hypocrites will avail thee nothing. The hypocrite 'shall not come before him,' that is, with acceptance, but shall perish. Job xiii. 16. Because it concerns thee much, let me over with it again! When thou shalt see less sinners than thou art, bound up by angels in bundles, to burn them, where wilt thou appear, sinner? Thou mayest wish thyself another man, but that will not help thee, sinner. Thou mayest wish, Would I had been converted in time; but that will not help thee either. And if, like the wife of Jeroboam, thou shouldst feign thyself to be another woman, the Prophet, the Lord Jesus, would soon find thee out! What wilt thou do, poor sinner? Heavy tidings, heavy tidings, will attend thee, except thou repent, poor sinner! 1 Ki. xiv. 2, 5, 6. Lu. xiii. 3, 5. O the dreadful state of a poor sinner, of an open profane sinner! Everybody that hath but common sense knows that this man is in the broad way to death, yet he laughs at his own damnation.

Shall I come to particulars with thee?

1. Poor unclean sinner, the 'harlot's house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.'

Pr. ii. 18; v. 5; vii. 27.

2. Poor swearing and thievish sinner, God hath

prepared the curse, that 'every one that stealth shall be cut off *as* on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off *as* on that side, according to it.' *Zec. v. 3.*

3. Poor drunken sinner, what shall I say to thee? 'Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim,' 'woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strong drink; they shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.' *Is. xxviii. 1; v. 22. 1 Co. vi. 9, 10.*

4. Poor covetous worldly man, God's Word says, that 'the covetous the Lord abhorreth;' that the 'covetous man is an idolater;' and that the covetous 'shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' *Ps. x. 3. Ep. v. 5. Jn. ii. 15. 1 Co. vi. 9, 10.*

5. And thou liar, what wilt thou do? 'All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' *Re. xxi. 8, 27.*

I shall not enlarge, poor sinner, let no man deceive thee; 'for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.' *Ep. v. 6.* I will therefore give thee a short call, and so leave thee.

Sinner, awake; yea, I say unto thee, awake! Sin lieth at thy door, and God's axe lieth at thy root, and hell-fire is right underneath thee. *Ge. iv. 7.* I say again, Awake! 'Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' *Mat. iii. 10.*

Poor sinner, awake; eternity is coming, and HHS

SON, they are both coming to judge the world ; awake, art yet asleep, poor sinner ? let me set the *trumpet* to thine ear once again ! The heavens will be shortly on a burning flame ; the earth, and the works thereof, shall be burned up, and then wicked men shall go into perdition ; dost thou hear this, sinner ? 2 Pe. iii. Hark again, the sweet morsels of sin will then be fled and gone, and the bitter burning fruits of them only left. What sayest thou now, sinner ? Canst thou drink hell-fire ? Will the wrath of God be a pleasant dish to thy taste ? This must be thine every day's meat and drink in hell, sinner !

I will yet propound to thee God's ponderous question, and then for this time leave thee : 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee ?' saith the Lord. Eze. xxi. 14. What sayest thou ? Wilt thou answer this question now, or wilt thou take time to do it ? or wilt thou be desperate, and venture all ? And let me put this text in thine ear to keep it open ; and so the Lord have mercy upon thee : 'Upon the wicked shall the Lord rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest ; *this shall be the portion of their cup.*' Ps. xl. 6. Repent, sinners !

[USE] SECOND.—My second word is *to them that are upon the potter's wheel* ; concerning whom we know not as yet whether their convictions and

awakenings will end in conversion or not. Several things I shall say to you, both to further your convictions, and to caution you from staying anywhere below or short of saving grace.

1. Remember that but few shall be saved; and if God should count thee worthy to be one of that few, what a mercy would that be!

2. Be thankful, therefore, for convictions; conversion begins at conviction, though all conviction doth not end in conversion. It is a great mercy to be convinced that we are sinners, and that we need a Saviour; count it therefore a mercy, and that thy convictions may end in conversion, do thou take heed of stifling of them. It is the way of poor sinners to look upon convictions as things that are hurtful; and therefore they use to shun the awakening ministry, and to check a convincing conscience. Such poor sinners are much like to the wanton boy that stands at the maid's elbow, to blow out her *candle* as fast as she lights it at the fire. Convinced sinner, God lighteth thy candle, and thou puttest it out; God lights it again, and thou puttest it out. Yea, 'how oft is the candle of the wicked put out?' Job xxi. 17. At last, God resolveth he will light thy candle no more; and then, like the Egyptians, you dwell all your days in darkness, and never see light more, but by the light of hell-fire; wherefore give glory to God, and *if he awakens* thy conscience, quench not thy con-

victions. Do it, saith the prophet, 'before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and he turn' your convictions 'into the shadow of death, *and* make *them* gross darkness.' *Je. xiii. 16.*

(1.) Be willing to see the worst of thy condition. It is better to see it here than in hell; for thou must see thy misery here or there. (2.) Beware of little sins; they will make way for great ones, and they again will make way for bigger, upon which God's wrath will follow; and then may thy latter end be worse than thy beginning. *2 Pe. ii. 20.* (3.) Take heed of bad company, and evil communication, for that will corrupt good manners. God saith, evil company will turn thee away from following him, and will tempt thee to serve other gods, devils. 'So the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.' *De. vii. 4.* (4.) Beware of such a thought as bids thee delay repentance, for that is damnable. *Pr. i. 24. Zec. vii. 12, 13.* (5.) Beware of taking example by some poor, carnal professor, whose religion lies in the tip of his tongue. Beware, I say, of the man whose head swims with notions, but 'his life is among the unclean.' *Job xxxvi. 14.* 'He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' *Pr. xiii. 20.* (6.) Give thyself much to the Word, and prayer, and good conference. (7.) Labour to see the sin that cleaveth to the best

of thy performances, and know that all is nothing if thou be not found in Jesus Christ. (8.) Keep in remembrance that God's eye is upon thy heart, and upon all thy ways. 'Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' *Je. xxiii. 24.* (9.) Be often meditating upon death and judgment. *Ec. xi. 9; xii. 14.* (10.) Be often thinking what a dreadful end sinners that have neglected Christ will make at that day of death and judgment. *He. x. 31.* (11.) Put thyself often, in thy thoughts, before Christ's judgment-seat, in thy sins, and consider with thyself, Were I now before my Judge, how should I look, how should I shake and tremble? (12.) Be often thinking of them that are now in hell, past all mercy; I say, be often thinking of them, thus: They were once in the world, as I now am; they once took delight in sin, as I have done; they once neglected repentance, as Satan would have me do. But now they are gone; now they are in hell, now the pit hath shut her mouth upon them!

Thou mayest also doubt * thy thoughts of the damned thus: If these poor creatures were in the world again, would they sin as they did before? would they neglect salvation as they did before?

* 'To doubt;' to suspect, make a question of, reconsider.
—*Ed.*

If they had sermons, as I have; if they had the Bible, as I have; if they had good company, as I have; yea, if they had a day of grace, as I have, would they neglect it as they did before?

Sinner, couldst thou soberly think of these things, they might help, God blessing them, to awaken thee, and to keep thee awake to repentance, to the repentance that is to salvation, never to be repented of.

Object. But you have said few shall be saved; and some that go a great way, yet are not saved. At this, therefore, I am even discouraged and weakened; I think I had as good go no further. I am, indeed, under conviction, but I may perish; and if I go on in my sins, I can but perish; and it is ten, twenty, and an hundred to one if I be saved, should I be ever so earnest for heaven.

Ans. That few will be saved must needs be a truth, for Christ hath said it; that many go far, and come short of heaven, is as true, being testified by the same hand. But what then? 'Why, then had I as good never seek.' Who told thee so? Must nobody seek because few are saved? This is just contrary to the text, that bids us therefore strive; strive to enter in, because the gate is strait, and because many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. But why go back again, seeing that is the next way to hell? Never go over hedge and ditch to hell. If I must needs go thither, I will

go the furthest way about. But who can tell, though there should not be saved so many as there shall, but thou mayest be one of that few? They that miss of life perish, because they will not let go their sins, or because they take up a profession short of the saving faith of the gospel. They perish, I say, because they are content with such things as will not prove graces of a saving nature when they come to be tried in the fire. Otherwise, the promise is free, and full, and everlasting—‘Him that cometh to me,’ saith Christ, ‘I will in no wise cast out;’ ‘for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ JN. VI. 37; III. 16. Wherefore let not this thought, Few shall be saved, weaken thy heart; but let it cause thee to mend thy pace, to mend thy cries, to look well to thy grounds for heaven; let it make thee fly faster from sin to Christ; let it keep thee awake, and out of carnal security, and thou mayest be saved.

USE THIRD.—My third word is *to professors*. Sirs, give me leave to set my trumpet to your ears again a little. When every man hath put in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance; I mean but few professors, for so the text intendeth, and so I have also proved. ‘For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.’ Let me, therefore, a little

expostulate the matter with you, O ye thousands of professors !

1. I begin with you whose religion lieth only in your tongues ; I mean you who are little or nothing known from the rest of the rabble of the world, only you can talk better than they. Hear me a word or two. If ' I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity,' that is, love to God, and Christ, and saints, and holiness, ' I am nothing ;' no child of God, and so have nothing to do with heaven. 1 Co. xiii. 1, 2. A prating tongue will not unlock the gates of heaven, nor blind the eyes of the Judge. Look to it. ' The wise in heart will receive commandments ; but a prating fool shall fall.' * Pr. x. 8.

2. Covetous professor, thou that makest a gain of religion, that usest thy profession to bring grist to thy mill, look to it also. Gain is not godliness. Judas's religion lay much in the bag, but his soul is now burning in hell. All covetousness is idolatry ; but what is that, or what will you call it, when men are religious for filthy lucre's sake ? Eze. xxxiii. 31.

3. Wanton professors, I have a word for you ; I

* When Talkative asked Faithful what difference there is between crying out against and abhorring sin, he answered, ' O! a great deal ; a man may cry out against sin of policy, but he cannot abhor it but by virtue of a godly antipathy against it. I have heard many cry out against sin in the pulpit, who yet can abide it well enough in the heart, house, and conversation.'—*Pilgrim's Progress*.

mean you that can tell how to mislead Scripture, to maintain your pride, your banqueting, and abominable idolatry. Read what Peter says. You are the snare and damnation of others. You 'allure through the lust of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.' 2 Pe. ii. 18. Besides, the Holy Ghost hath a great deal against you, for your feastings, and eating without fear, not for health, but gluttony. Jude 13. Further, Peter says, that you that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time are spots and blemishes, sporting yourselves with your own deceivings. 2 Pe. ii. 13. And let me ask, Did God give his Word to justify your wickedness? or doth grace teach you to plead for the flesh, or the making provision for the lusts thereof? Of these also are they that feed their bodies to strengthen their lusts, under pretence of strengthening frail nature. But pray, remember the text, 'Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

4. I come next to the opinionist; I mean, to him whose religion lieth in some circumstantial of religion. With this sort this kingdom swarms at this day. These think all out of the way that are not of their mode, when themselves may be out of the way in the midst of their zeal for their opinions. Pray, do you also observe the text; 'Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and *shall not be able.*'

5. Neither is the formalist exempted from this number. He is a man that hath lost all but the shell of religion. He is hot, indeed, for his form; and no marvel, for that is his all to contend for. But his form being without the power and spirit of godliness, it will leave him in his sins; nay, he standeth now in them in the sight of God, and is one of the many that 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' 2 TI. III. 5.

6. The legalist comes next, even him that hath no life but what he makes out of his duties. This man hath chosen to stand or fall by Moses, who is the condemner of the world. 'There is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.'

JN. v. 45.

7. There is, in the next place, the libertine—he that pretendeth to be against forms and duties, as things that gender to bondage, neglecting the order of God. This man pretends to pray always, but, under that pretence, prays not at all; he pretends to keep every day a Sabbath, but this pretence serves him only to cast off all set times for the worship of God. This is also one of the many that 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

TIT. I. 16.

8. There is the temporizing latitudinarian. He is a man that hath no God but his belly, nor any religion but that by which his belly is worshipped. His religion is always, like the times, turning this

way and that way, like the cock on the steeple; neither hath he any conscience but a benumbed and seared one, and is next door to a downright atheist; and also is one of the many that 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

9. There is also the wilfully ignorant professor, or him that is afraid to know more, for fear of the cross. He is for picking and choosing of truth, and loveth not to hazard his all for that worthy name by which he would be called. When he is at any time overset by arguments, or awakenings of conscience, he uses to heal all by—I was not brought up in this faith; as if it were unlawful for Christians to know more than hath been taught them at first conversion. There are many scriptures that lie against this man, as the mouths of great guns, and he is one of the many that 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

10. We will add to all these, the professor that would prove himself a Christian, by comparing himself with others, instead of comparing himself with the Word of God. This man comforts himself, because he is as holy as such and such; he also knows as much as that old professor, and then concludes he shall go to heaven: as if he certainly knew, that those with whom he compareth himself would be undoubtedly saved; but how if he should be *mistaken*? nay, may they not both fall short? But to *be sure* he is in the wrong that hath made the com-

parison; and a wrong foundation will not stand in the day of judgment. 2 Co. x. 12. This man, therefore, is one of the many that 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

11. There is yet another professor; and he is for God and for Baal too; he can be anything for any company; he can throw stones with both hands; his religion alters as fast as his company; he is a frog of Egypt, and can live in the water and out of the water; he can live in religious company, and again as well out. Nothing that is disorderly comes amiss to him; he will hold with the hare, and run with the hound; he carries fire in the one hand, and water in the other; he is a very anything but what he should be. This is also one of the many that 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'*

12. There is also that free-willer, who denies to the Holy Ghost the sole work in conversion; and that Socinian, who denieth to Christ that he hath made to God satisfaction for sin; and that Quaker, who takes from Christ the two natures in his person: and I might add as many more, touching whose damnation, they dying as they are, the Scripture

* Similar to By-ends, who never strove for heaven against wind or weather; was most zealous when religion walked in his silver slippers, and walked with him in the streets while the sun shone, and people applauded him.—*Pilgrim's Progress*.

is plain: these 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' But,

[USE] FOURTH.—If it be so, *what a strange disappointment will many professors meet with at the day of judgment!* I speak not now to the open profane; everybody, as I have said, that hath but common understanding between good and evil, knows that they are in the broad way to hell and damnation, and they must needs come thither; nothing can hinder it but repentance unto salvation, except God should prove a liar to save them, and it is hard venturing of that.

Neither is it amiss, if we take notice of the examples that are briefly mentioned in the Scriptures, concerning professors that have miscarried. 1. Judas perished from among the apostles. Ac. i. 2. Demas, as I think, perished from among the evangelists. 2 Ti. iv. 10. 3. Diotrephes from among the ministers, or them in office in the church. 3 Ju. 9. 4. And as for Christian professors, they have fallen by heaps, and almost by whole churches. 2 Ti. i. 15. Re. iii. 4, 15—17. 5. Let us add to these, that the things mentioned in the Scriptures about these matters, are but brief hints and items of what is afterwards to happen; as the apostle said, 'Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after.' 1 Ti. v. 24.

So that, fellow-professors, let us fear, lest a

promise being left us of entering into this rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. O! to come short! nothing kills like it, nothing will burn like it. I intend not discouragements, but awakenings; the churches have need of awakening, and so have all professors. Do not despise me, therefore, but hear me over again. What a strange disappointment will many professors meet with at the day of God Almighty!—a disappointment, I say, and that as to several things.

(1.) They will look to escape hell, and yet fall just into the mouth of hell: what a disappointment will be here! (2.) They will look for heaven, but the gate of heaven will be shut against them: what a disappointment is here! (3.) They will expect that Christ should have compassion for them, but will find that he hath shut up all bowels of compassion from them: what a disappointment is here! Again,

[USE] FIFTH.—As this disappointment will be fearful, *so certainly it will be very full of amazement.*

1. Will it not amaze them to be unexpectedly excluded from life and salvation? 2. Will it not be amazing to them to see their own madness and folly, while they consider how they have dallied with their own souls, and took lightly for granted that they had that grace that would save them, but hath left them in a damnable state? 3. Will they not also be amazed one at another, while they re-

member how in their lifetime they counted themselves fellow-heirs of life? To allude to that of the prophet, 'They shall be amazed one at another, their faces *shall be as flames.*' Is. xiii. 8. 4. Will it not be amazing to some of the damned themselves, to see some come to hell that then they shall see come thither? to see preachers of the Word, professors of the Word, practisers in the Word, to come thither. What wondering was there among them at the fall of the king of Babylon, since he thought to have swallowed up all, because he was run down by the Medes and Persians! 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations!' If such a thing as this will with amazement surprise the damned, what an amazement will it be to them to see such a one as he whose head reached to the clouds, to see him come down to the pit, and perish for ever like his own dung. 'Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet *thee* at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief ones of the earth.' Is. xiv. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man? Is this he that professed, and disputed, and forsook us; but now he is come to us again? Is this he that separated from us, but now he is fallen with *us* into the same eternal damnation with us?

[USE] SIXTH.—Yet again, *one word more, if I*

may awaken professors. Consider, though the poor carnal world shall certainly perish, yet they will want these things to aggravate their sorrow, which thou wilt meet with in every thought that thou wilt have of the condition thou wast in when thou wast in the world.

1. They will not have a profession, to bite them when they come thither. 2. They will not have a taste of a lost heaven, to bite them when they come thither. 3. They will not have the thoughts of, 'I was almost at heaven,' to bite them when they come thither. 4. They will not have the thoughts of, how they cheated saints, ministers, churches, to bite them when they come thither. 5. They will not have the dying thoughts of false faith, false hope, false repentance, and false holiness, to bite them when they come thither. I was at the gates of heaven, I looked into heaven, I thought I should have entered into heaven; O how will these things sting! They will, if I may call them so, be the sting of the sting of death in hell-fire.

[USE] SEVENTH.—Give me leave now in a word to give you a little advice.

1. Dost thou love thine own soul? then pray to Jesus Christ for an awakened heart, for a heart so awakened with all the things of another world, that thou mayest be allured to Jesus Christ. 2. When thou comest there, beg again for more awakenings about sin, hell, grace, and about the righteousness

of Christ. 3. Cry also for a spirit of discerning, that thou mayest know that which is saving grace indeed. 4. Above all studies apply thyself to the study of those things that show thee the evil of sin, the shortness of man's life, and which is the way to be saved. 5. Keep company with the most godly among professors. 6. When thou hearest what the nature of true grace is, defer not to ask thine own heart if this grace be there. And here take heed—

(1.) That the preacher himself be sound, and of good life. (2.) That thou takest not seeming graces for real ones, nor seeming fruits for real fruits. (3.) Take heed that a sin in thy life goes not unrepented of; for that will make a flaw in thine evidence, a wound in thy conscience, and a breach in thy peace; and a hundred to one, if at last it doth not drive all the grace in thee into so dark a corner of thy heart, that thou shalt not be able, for a time, by all the torches that are burning in the gospel, to find it out to thine own comfort and consolation.*

* The striving inculcated in this treatise reminds us of Hopkins's bold appeal to conscience. He says, 'There must be a holy roughness and violence, to break through all that stands in our way; neither caring for allurements, nor fearing opposition, but by a pious obstinacy and frowardness, we must thrust away the one and bear down the other. This is the *Christian* who will carry heaven by force, when the whining *pusillanimous* professor, who only complains of difficulty, but *never attempts* to conquer it, will be for ever shut out!'—E.D.

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